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SEPTEMBER 1988

A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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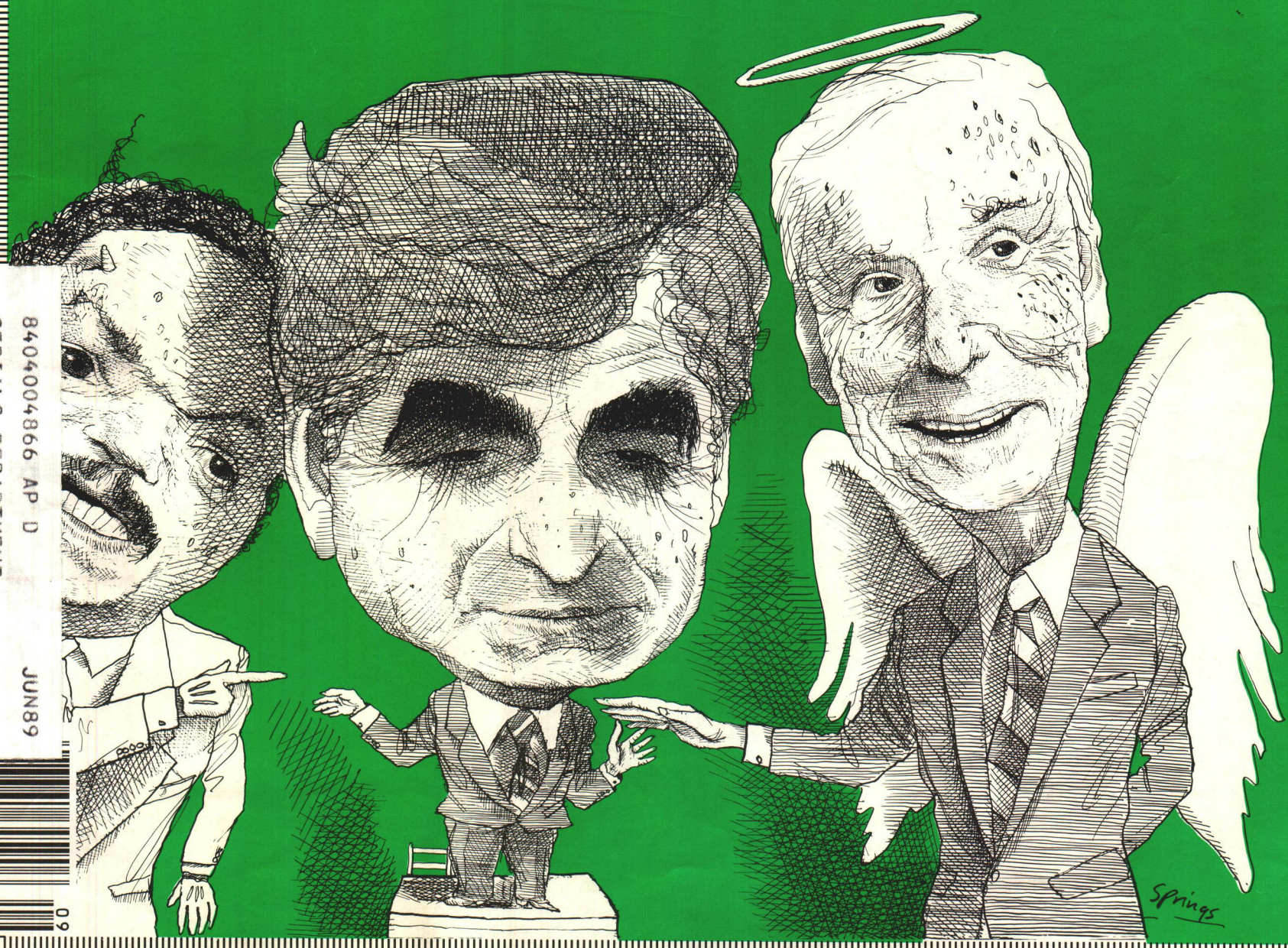

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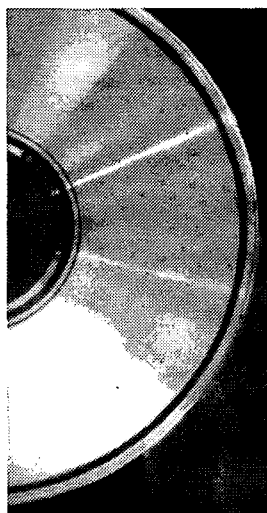

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You deserve to know the facts about. . .

Mubarak Awad

Was Israel justified in expelling him?

For the last few months, there have been almost daily stories about Mubarak Awad, an American citizen of Arab-Palestinian heritage. The Israeli government expelled Awad and returned him to his adopted country—the United States. Our government has taken interest in the case and has expressed its concern to Israel about this matter. It's easy to get confused.

What are the facts?

■ Mubarak Awad is an Arab, born in the eastern sector of Jerusalem. In 1969, Awad emigrated to the United States and became an American citizen by naturalization. Israeli law stipulates that a non-citizen resident who lives outside the area for seven years loses his resident status. Availing himself of his U.S. citizenship, Awad started making periodic visits to Israel. During his sojourns as a "tourist" and under the cover of his U.S. citizenship, Awad organized the "Palestine Center for the Study of Non-Violence." That organization promotes general civil rebellion of the Arab population of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza.

■ Having exhausted the forbearance of the Israeli authorities, the government of Israel decided to expel him and to send him back to the United States, of which he is a citizen. One basic attribute of sovereignty is that a nation can determine which foreigners may or may not reside in its country. It's a sovereign country's prerogative to expel anybody whom they consider undesirable; and they, of course, have to be the judges as to who is and who is not undesirable. The United States routinely refuses entry into the country to those whose political activities we think of as being contrary to our interests. Until recently, we even barred those whose sexual orientation did not conform to the norm. And we routinely expel those who are here illegally, or who are engaged in activities that are contrary to the interests of our country.

■ How then can the Israeli government possibly be faulted for expelling Awad? They would have been quite within their rights not to allow him to enter the country in the first place. But they allowed him to stay and expelled him ultimately only after he emerged as one of the top leaders of the current Arab uprising against Israeli authority.

■ Those who are determined to bestow the mantle of martyrdom on Mubarak Awad call him an "apostle of non-violence" and compare him to Gandhi and Martin Luther King. But the reality is quite different. Dr. King deeply loved America and tried to strengthen it through his campaign of non-violence. By explicitly supporting the terrorist PLO, by declaring violence to be a legitimate means of advancing Palestinian political goals, by viewing non-violence as a tactical complement to violence in the Palestinian uprising, and by subscribing to the PLO's concept of "armed struggle" and to the ultimate liquidation of Israel, he revealed himself as what he really is: a revolutionary to whom "non-violence" is only one of many revolutionary weapons.

■ As Americans we must be particularly concerned about Awad's misuse of his American citizenship. In becoming an American citizen, he took an oath to forswear all foreign allegiances and to reside permanently in the United States. He clearly broke his oath on at least those two counts. Before the Israeli Supreme Court, he declared that he had used his "American citizenship and passport solely for bureaucratic reasons of convenience, without attaching any importance and weight whatsoever," and that he "viewed Jerusalem as his place of residence, always." He made statements to the same effect on the MacNeil/Lehrer Report of Tuesday, June 14. Mubarak Awad treated the priceless gift of American citizenship with disdain and cynically used it for his political purposes and his foreign entanglements. How fortunate for Awad that we Americans are such good-natured, forgiving and patient people! Any other country would at the very least have stripped him of the citizenship that he had acquired by swearing falsely and with the obligations of which he never intended to comply.

It is clear that Israel was totally within its rights to expel Mubarak Awad, a rabble-rouser who used the cover of his U.S. citizenship to foment revolution in Israel and in the territories administered by Israel. Israel would have been fully justified in expelling him summarily. But they gave him every legal opportunity to have the expulsion order rescinded. Awad's assumed role as a latter-day Gandhi or Martin Luther King is a sham. Disregarding all other aspects of this case, his true personality is revealed in his cynical misuse of his American citizenship.

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C O N T E N T S

You Can Have Him ..... Philip Terzian 12
New England can't stand Dukakis; now it's our turn to suffer.

The Peachtree Party ..... Andrew Ferguson 14
Our man in Atlanta reports on Democrats playing make-believe.

Takeovers and Acquisitions: Who's Responsible? ..... Benjamin J. Stein 16
You first must ask: Who stands to profit? Could it be the middlemen?

Losing the Drug War: Drugs, Banks, and Florida Politics ..... James Ring Adams 20
Narcotics trading flourishes in the Sunshine State not only because of demand, but also because it is a major source of campaign and other political funding. If the pols won't lead the fight against drugs, who will?

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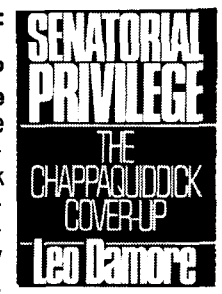
by Leo Damore



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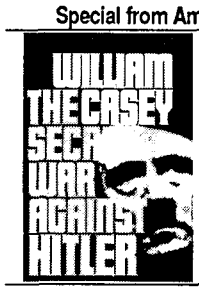

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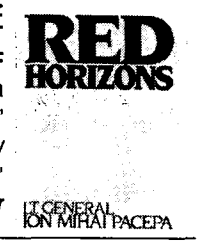

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•July was baked to a cinder and discarded as the summer sun transformed America into the largest sauna chamber in the world. The concomitant drought made farmers even more idle than usual, though the federal government promised more opportunities to engage in the noble husbandmen's favorite pastime, lugging heavy federal checks down to the First National. The drought left migrant farm workers with practically no place to which they might migrate profitably. And even some of the pillars of American society were affected. Golfers were especially hard hit, as the sun seared their grassy proving grounds. Tennis players fled for the indoors, repelled by the sight of their own copious sweat. Nor were the nation's duck hunters spared. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife service reports that a record number of North American ducks have fled far into the northlands to escape the drought, meaning that population growth among them will be drastically reduced and that there will be fewer web-footed fowl in Southern nesting areas for duck hunters to blast hell out of.

•Evidence that history repeats itself was fulsomely provided in the Ukraine, where, at a sepulchral gathering for a gentleman who had croaked from drinking industrial alcohol, mourners imbibed more of the same, leaving ten at room temperature and eighty hospitalized. In Atlanta, Georgia, the Democrats nominated yet another prosaic governor of the humorless, goody-two-shoes variety to wrest the White House from the clutches of the Fortune 500 and the Eastern Bankers. After several days of high jinks by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, a Democratic National Convention, whose composition was heavily fruit cake (only 38 percent were white males and many of them walked oddly), nominated Governor Michael S. Dukakis as its presidential candidate and Senator Lloyd Bentsen to help with the jokes. It is a gruesome ticket, expressive of a gruesome gathering. Much of the convention's oratory was devoted to the deplorable state of the American economy, then in its sixty-seventh straight month of growth with high employment, low inflation, and rising productivity. Cataracts of tears were shed for the enormities of American history; and the TV cameras fixed on woebegone visages of black delegates, Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, people with runny noses, acne, incurable bad breath, bad teeth, atrocious wardrobes, and not one cheerful woman. What is more, considering that most of the men were middle-aged, a surprisingly large number had at least one idiotic cowlick sticking up. Finally, Vice President George Bush took a fearful drubbing. During his speech Senator Edward Kennedy roused the morons with repeated queries as to "Where was George?"—a line that lost its allure for him the following morning when Republican wags began to respond with "Where is Mary Jo?"

•The Consensus Press adjudged the confabulation very auspicious for the fall elections, insisting that the party's divisiveness was now consigned to the dark past and far away. This from the same press corps that insisted the Rev. Jesse Jackson never would covet the party's number two spot and always would be very polite. Possibly this time the Consensus Press is right, but the Democrats' dubious incantation, "unity from diversity," suggests disunity ahead, and the fact that they have given the Rev. Jackson a campaign plane and one hundred more days on the campaign trail reinforces that premonition. Moreover, on July 22 *Pravda* published a very ingratiating profile of the Democrats' choice. Of course that might be owing to the fact that when the Soviets held their party congress earlier in the month it was only marginally further to the left than the Democrats' convention.

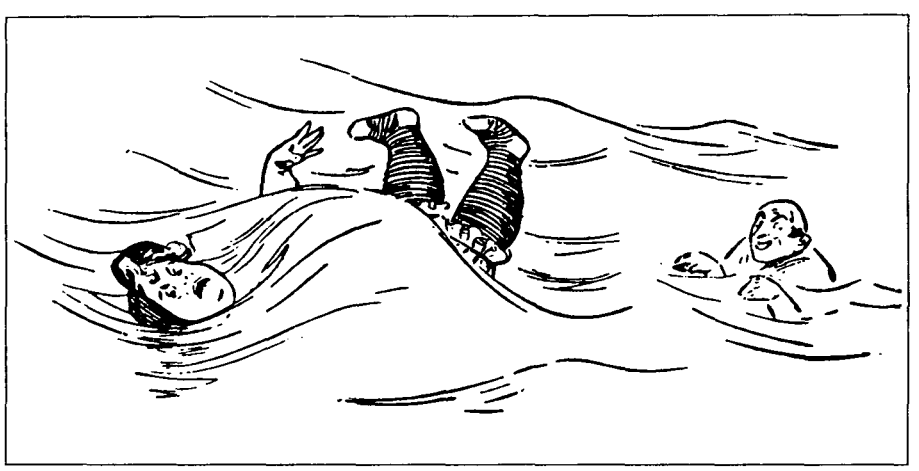
•An American patriot was given two years' probation and ordered by a New Haven judge to pay $5,000 apiece to the Yale Coalition Against Apartheid and a local fire department. Dr. Elwood Bracey, 52, who bravely applied Prometheus' gift to unsightly and hazardous anti-apartheid shanties, which peace knaves had built on the grounds of Yale University's war memorial, will also be coerced into paying an unspecified sum to Yale if he is to avoid further trouble with what passes for the law in the Socialist Republic of New Haven. In Springfield, Illinois, burglars stole an $800 set of false teeth from atop the stomach of a sleeping man, also making off with his camera, his wallet, and $79 worth of food stamps. In New Orleans, Louisiana, delegates to the National Educational Association's convention, all glassy-eyed and devoted, approved a resolution exhorting school districts to provide counseling for students flummoxed about their "sexual identities." Miss Roxanne Bradshaw, secretary-treasurer of the NEA, testified that she knew a young girl who was so distressed about her sexual identity that she attempted suicide and now lies in a coma. Unfortunately, the NEA's resolution comes too late for a West Jordan, Utah woman who burned out her kitchen and nearly destroyed her home when she placed her underpants in the microwave and they ignited. The woman, whose name the authorities have withheld, claims she was only following the counsel of researchers from the University of Florida Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology on how to prevent yeast infection, but as every NEA delegate knows there has to be more to it than that.

•Mr. Stefan Edberg won his first Wimbledon title, and in New London, Connecticut, a mistrial was declared in the case of Mr. Richard Crafts who is accused of having murdered his wife and of disposing of her remains by using a wood chipper as though it were a gigantic Cuisinart. A queasy juror abandoned the deliberations. In Hayward, California, officials violated the sanctity of family life to prevent a Me Generation mother, Mrs. Mary Francis Bergamasco, from punishing her seven-year-old son by displaying him on the front lawn dressed as a pig and wearing a sign inscribed, "I am a dumb pig. Ugly is what you will become every time you lie and steal. Look at me squeal. My hands are tied because I cannot be trusted. This is a lesson to be learned. Look. Laugh. Thief. Stealing. Bad boy." All of which sounds very much like the logic and style of a late July *New Republic* editorial against boxing.

•Early in the month Attorney General Edwin Meese claimed vindication and announced that he was retiring to the Heritage Foundation and to the Hoover Institution. The Sandinistas expelled the United States Ambassador after harshly repressing a political demonstration. In Verona, Italy, two Germans were arrested after causing a traffic hazard by copulating on the side of a major highway, and Mrs. Anna della Vecchia has lodged a formal complaint against Tarzan and Sultan, two libidinous male lions residing at the nearby American Circus whose nocturnal amorous trysts with the circus's females have caused an unseemly racket though no arrests have been made. On July 19 what is loosely referred to as the government of Iran announced its intention to end hostilities with Iraq, just days after the venerable *Washington Times* reported that the

Correction

In recent months this column has incorrectly referred to Governor Martin C. Dukakis of Massachusetts as Mary Lou Dukakis. This error was in no way meant to reflect on the Governor's relative obscurity or lack of stature. Our fact checkers simply were unaware of the Massachusetts miracle's consequence for world history.



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Ayatollah Khomeini wears a small transistor radio around his dirty neck and watches Mickey Mouse cartoons.

•Governor Dukakis's former education adviser, aptly named Mr. Gerard T. Indelicato, was sentenced to two and a half years in the hoosegow for conspiracy, mail fraud, and tax evasion. Miss Geraldine Ferraro's son, Mr. John Zaccaro, filed notice that he will appeal his conviction for selling $25 worth of cocaine to an undercover agent. Miss Mildred Gillars, the American-born Nazi propagandist known as Axis Sally, passed on as did Mr. Richard Schulze-Kossens, an adjutant to the late Adolf Hitler. Miss Nico, one of Andy Warhol's film stars, assumed room temperature for the last time, and Dr. Ely Perlman, the well-known New York City pollen counter, died of respiratory failure. Finally in San Francisco, California, an aroused citizenry is mobilizing against that infamous throwback of yesteryear, circumcision. According to the group's literature, "we are still the only industrialized nation that routinely circumcises most of its baby boys. The implications—for sexual relationships, for issues of power, authority, and violence—are enormous." And the group, called The Victims Speak, promises foreskin restoration—O new Utopia!

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Takeover Talk

In his article "The Selling of America" (*TAS*, May 1988), Irwin M. Stelzer expresses delight at the takeover mania. He rejoices at the profits that investment banks and lawyers are making as a result of corporate takeovers they have engineered. He thinks it's great that these types spend their days and nights "looking for deal-making opportunities and a chance to earn impressive fees." He seems not to understand that a strong economy depends on something more than deal-making.

The hostile takeovers of recent years have destabilized American business to an alarming degree. They have done enormous harm to well-established, sound companies and to many communities, managers, and workers. I wish that Mr. Stelzer would read D. George Harris's article "They Took Over His Company" in the May number of *Business Month*. Mr. Harris points out that "the takeover phenomenon hasn't done a thing for the American economy." He expresses the view of many responsible American businessmen, namely that the "iron triangle of takeover mania is the old story of speculators triumphing over investors. Corporate raiders aren't interested in corporate efficiency. Their aim is to make a quick buck and then move on to another company from which they can strip the cash.

—Anthony Harrigan
President
U.S. Business and Industrial Council
Washington, D.C.

Irwin M. Stelzer replies:

Mr. Harrigan argues, first, that I do not seem "to understand that a strong economy depends on something more than deal making." Of course it does. But it depends, too, on such deal making—deal making which makes it possible for assets to be deployed in their most productive uses. Think, for a moment, about an economy in which the management of assets was perpetually frozen in the hands of those who happen to control them at any point in time. Certainly, the inefficiencies and sloth that would result would be extraordinary.

He next complains that takeovers "have destabilized American business." Quite right. Again, think of a business environment in which there was a guarantee of stability and an assurance that, regardless of performance, business would remain in the same hands. Unhealthy, to say the least.

Finally, Mr. Harrigan worries about the debt taken on in the course of many takeovers. In my view, the owners of any business should be free to decide on the debt/equity ratios with which those businesses will operate. That is what stockholders do, in effect, when they decide to choose new managers to run their businesses, in the full knowledge that those new managers take on additional debt. So far, shareholders have decided wisely: companies that issued high-yield debt in the 1980-1986 period have grown faster, had higher productivity increases, and increased plant and equipment investment more rapidly than industry in general.

Hummon Talmadge

In his recent review-essay "Hummon Talmadge of Georgia" (*TAS*, April 1988), Eugene Methvin argues that "to suggest the false while suppressing the true" is to lie as surely as doing in one's "mother with a rusty ax in broad daylight in a downtown department store" is to murder. By that definition, Mr. Methvin's own mother must be in as bad a shape as Lizzie Borden's. His admittedly "hostile" attack on the personal character and public career of Senator Talmadge is a venomous pastiche of inaccuracies and innuendoes unworthy of a distinguished conservative publication such as *The American Spectator*.

The inaccuracies begin in the first paragraph with Methvin's misstatement of my role in producing Talmadge's recent autobiography. The book was a collaboration based on my taped conversations with the former senator. In preparing for this project, I did a considerable amount of research in Georgia politics of the Talmadge era. This included viewing videotapes of interviews Talmadge did with a couple of professors at West Georgia College. To say, as Methvin does, that I simply edited those videotapes is tantamount to saying that William Novak's collaboration with Lee Iacocca amounted to his editing Iacocca's television commercials.

"The tragedy of Herman Talmadge," according to Methvin, "is that he had so much political talent and such a devoted following that he might have moved mountains, and yet he accomplished so little." The truth is that much of the social and economic progress Georgia has enjoyed over the past forty years is the result of the foundation laid during Herman Talmadge's years as governor. The facts and figures to back up this assertion (which are too extensive to go into here) are detailed in Talmadge's autobiography. To quote Atlanta editor Ralph McGill, one of the patron saints of Southern liberalism, "I think Governor Talmadge has done a constructive job, that he has contributed greatly to Georgia's progress in every field save race relations."

Of course, the exception made in McGill's statement is the real crux of Methvin's brief against Herman Talmadge. There is no question that, like the vast majority of Southern politicians of his generation, Talmadge was a segregationist. That puts him on the losing side of history just as surely as Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis were. Perhaps in a hundred years it will be possible to view the segregationists of the mid-twentieth century with the same balance and detachment with which we now see the defenders of an earlier Southern way of life. Until that time, we can at least reject Methvin's implied argument that segregationist politicians such as Talmadge were, by definition, accomplices to Klan violence. (That is simply a variation of the argument that Reagan's opposition to affirmative action quotas somehow made Howard Beach possible.)

Although Herman Talmadge fought to preserve segregation during his years as governor of Georgia, the advances the state made in education, health care, and other social services benefited both races. In fact, blacks probably benefited more because they had farther to come. For this reason, a few black leaders (such as Robert Parks of Cedartown) supported Talmadge in his first run for the Senate in 1956, and others (such as insurance executive Jesse Hill) followed suit during his campaign for re-election. In his final run for office in 1980, Talmadge had the active support of many blacks, including Martin Luther King's niece Alveda King Beal. While in office he was the first deep South senator to appoint a black aide to his staff. Indeed, by 1959 Talmadge was drawing fire from the segregationist press for stating on the floor of the Senate that the Brown decision was the law of the land.

If Mr. Methvin has read Talmadge's book closely, he knows that as a young man Herman Talmadge teamed up with the legendary civil rights attorney Austin T. Walden to defend a black man accused of murder in a barroom brawl with a white. (They got the charge reduced to manslaughter.) Years later, when Walden was trying a racially explosive case in Miller County, Governor Talmadge dispatched state troopers to provide him with round-the-clock protection. To be sure, the man who did these things was a segregationist, but he was not nor could he have been a supporter of racist violence.

Herman Talmadge's autobiography forthrightly confronts virtually every charge dredged up by Mr. Methvin and scores of others he fails to mention. It is no whitewash but a candid recollection and, yes, defense of a remarkable public life. In calling it an apologia, Methvin has stumbled upon a very apt historical analogy. When the smoke of controversy has cleared, it will be evident that Talmadge's critics have been playing Charles Kingsley to the senator's Cardinal Newman.

—Mark Royden Winchell
Department of English
Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina

(continued on page 46)

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EDITORIALS

VEEP STAKES

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

What decision could more hilariously demonstrate the hypothesis that in recent years American political leadership has suffered a massive loss of intelligence than Governor Michael Dukakis's choice of Senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate? Soon we shall see if George Bush has suffered a similar loss of intelligence.

Balancing the ticket is supposed to mean choosing a running mate from different areas of the country or from different cultural backgrounds, not from different ends of the philosophical spectrum. By choosing Senator Bentsen, Governor Dukakis has shown that to him ideas and principles are to be exploited, not implemented. His cynicism will not ingratiate him to his fellow liberals or to the conservatives in his party. What he got the other day when he reached beyond the confines of Massachusetts was a museum piece, a 1930s style Democrat with no television presence and no allure beyond Texas and the wheeler-dealer salons of Capitol Hill.

Senator Bentsen has in 1988 surpassed all his colleagues in snagging contributions from political action committees, a lush $1.4 million. He is the maestro of the $2,000,000 breakfast, having in 1987 proposed that 200 Washington lobbyists pay $10,000 to enjoy breakfast with him. This practice ended only after a *Washington Post* exposé. So, there goes the sleaze issue, eh Governor Dukakis?

Governor Dukakis had plenty of sensible choices available to him. He could have chosen Congressman Lee Hamilton of Indiana who brings geographical balance and philosophical compatibility, and is a competent campaigner. Less liberal but equally attractive would have been Ohio's Senator John Glenn or Georgia's Sam Nunn. Rather, while bragging about how his campaign will march us into the future, Governor Dukakis is borrowing from the past, and a somewhat unsavory past at that. How does one explain such a botch? I return to the hypothesis that there has been a huge loss in political intelligence in the country. Over the past two decades too many trivial issues and humbug values have come to command the pols' attention. Such distractions now leave them just a bit stupid. Since early June poor Governor Dukakis has had to attend to all the conflicting zealots in his party. Traditional interests, such as labor unions, can be reasonably dealt with, but the new interests—the aggrieved minorities, the inflamed liberationists—are usually beyond reason. Ultimately, such distractions impair a candidate's judgment.

Soon we are going to witness the result of Vice President Bush's judgment. Will he botch? There are plenty of Senator Bentsens in his party, too. I would hope that the Vice President will run a far superior campaign than most of the Republic's political connoisseurs expect. He has flummoxed around in recent months, but it is his advantage to be always underestimated. During the primary season he did well in debate and he has a fine television adviser in Roger Ailes, as Dan Rather so painfully demonstrated. Finally he is not bedeviled by the distractions that dizzy Democratic leaders.

Against Governor Dukakis's choice of the wan and aging Senator Bentsen I hope Mr. Bush will enlist New York's Congressman Jack Kemp, the vigorous and youthful ex-quarterback of the Buffalo Bills who wins the Democratic blue-collar vote in his district every time. Kemp is a proven campaigner, whose support in the Republican primaries would have been substantially larger had the Rev. Pat Robertson not competed for it. Kemp is an agreeable man who would be a cooperative running mate. His views are consistent with the Vice President's on such major issues as the Strategic Defense Initiative, Central American policy, national security, and the means to sustained economic growth. He would help the Republican ticket in upstate New York, California, and the South, as well as with Reaganite Democrats. He gets along well with the press and has already been thoroughly scrutinized for bugs.

Finally Kemp will turn out the Republican conservatives who feel the White House has neglected them. As no less a political sage than Richard Nixon will tell you, a Republican cannot win without active participation from this constituency. And then consider the televised debate between Kemp and Governor Dukakis's number two! □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

JOHN LEHMAN'S ENEMIES

We know from published accounts that the enemies of former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman compose a shadowy lot. Some are defense contractors associated with behemoth corporations. Some are defense consultants. Some are mere admirals, but others are actual senators and congressmen charged with overseeing the Pentagon's relations with defense contractors. In fine, most of Lehman's enemies hold one thing in common: they are members in good standing of the Military Industrial Complex. Bear that in mind as the Justice Department's inquiry into military procurement fraud finds its way into the newspapers—and remember it was Lehman whose reforms made the procurement of ships and planes more competitive.

From 1981 to 1987 Lehman was the agile and indefatigable advocate of the 600-ship Navy—that being 100 more than when he arrived at the Pentagon. He was only twenty ships short of his goal when he left the Pentagon. Thus the enmity that so many in the Military Industrial Complex hold against him cannot issue from his dovishness. Lehman's growing Navy put doves in mind of the Spanish Armada, which was not as lethal and as gluttonous toward fossile fuel. To understand the enemies of John Lehman, who today murmur against him and the reforms he instituted, one needs to understand the slow, plodding, self-aggrandizing ways of bureaucracy as did Max Weber—after the emergence of statism in the last century—and as do such insightful political scientists as James Q. Wilson today. Bureaucracy spreads ceaselessly, making its own process more sacred than its original goal and more costly. The original goal of arms

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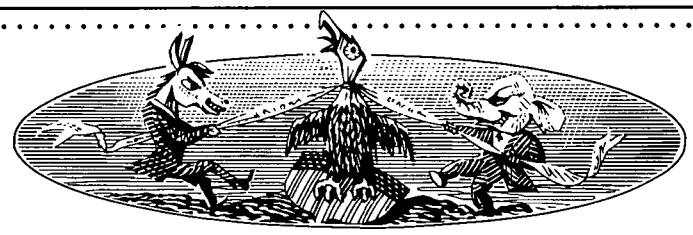
procurement bureaucrats was effective weapons at economical prices. By the time Lehman arrived the procurement of weaponry had become more important than the goal, resulting in wasted taxpayers' dollars and inefficiency.

The irony of dragging Lehman's name into the present scandal is that his procedures have done more to open procurement to the public gaze than had theretofore been possible. For instance, peacetime admirals dealt with weapons contractors who most frequently had not had to compete with second and third bidders on a given weapon. Moreover, they operated on a cost-plus basis. Thus admirals were allowed to redesign weapons during the life of the weapons' contract without regard to costs and usually free from scrutiny. Their monopoly contractors were glad to indulge the admirals' every whim, for with cost-plus contracts they merely added on higher costs and realized higher profits unencumbered by a competitor who might have given the Pentagon a better price. During the 1970s, every Navy program overran its original contract by 50 percent. With Lehman's reforms ship building programs came in *under* budget by $8 billion.

Now the admirals must decide on a weapon's design before writing a contract, and contracts are written on a fixed-cost basis. What is more, contractors frequently have to compete for a weapons contract. In 1981, 85 percent of the Navy's contracts were awarded to contractors without competitive bidding and on the cost-plus basis. Now 75 percent are awarded competitively and at fixed prices. Finally, weapons contractors are now being required to invest their own capital in producing a military product, just as other companies do in creating products in a free market. Hitherto the government bought these plants and paid for the tooling according to the state socialist model that the Pentagon adopted during World War II.

Lehman's reforms have saved the taxpayer billions of dollars and encouraged weapons contractors to deliver their products efficiently. Many of his reforms have been recommended for the other branches of the military by a presidential commission headed by that eminent wizard of the private sector, David Packard of the Hewlett Packard Corporation. Thus those in the Military Industrial Complex who do not want to adapt to the efficient and more open ways of the market see the present looming scandal in procurement as a way to denigrate Lehman. Remember this: In all the news stories about John Lehman, no charges of illegality or even impropriety have been brought. All that is charged is that he changed the system—and for the good. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



GAYS ON PARADE

by Tom Bethell

"This year's theme—Rightfully Proud—is a very fitting one," the *Bay Area Reporter* claimed in an editorial heralding this year's San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration. "We have the right to be proud. We've earned that right. Look around you at what we have created and continue to create."

I stationed myself on Market Street, and looked around the large crowd that had assembled for the "gay pride" parade. Rightfully Proud! About 3300 San Francisco residents have now died of AIDS, and an unknown number (officially estimated as 27,000) is infected with the virus. At one point the parade grand marshal Holly Near said: "We also acknowledge those who could not be with us today, either because they are frightened or in the closet, they are ill, or they had to be doing some other kind of work in their life. If everyone who supports gay and lesbian rights were here today, there would be even more than 275,000." (San Francisco police estimated the crowd at 160,000.)

Absent because ill, maybe. But absent because frightened? Homosexuals may be a minority, but their claim to be an oppressed one is less and less convincing. As the columnist Joe Sobran says, it takes a lot of clout to be an accredited minority with victim status these days, and homosexuals have shown that they have the clout. The only frightening thing about Gay Freedom Day in San Francisco is the possibility of being confronted with public accusations of homophobia and set upon by the mob (which has happened, I'm told).

The Mayor of San Francisco, Art Agnos, his wife, and two children rode in the parade in a convertible with an AIDS "sufferer." (The word "victim," after the word AIDS, is now on the Gay-Index, because it projects a negative image, supposedly.) Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi also rode in the parade. So did District Attorney Arlo Smith. Yes, even the D.A. was in the Gay Pride Parade. There he was sitting in the back of an open Chrysler, waving at the crowds. The parade stopped briefly, giving me the opportunity to venture out into the road.

"Mr. Smith," I said, "do you get any criticism from straights for participating in this parade?"

The parade started up again and his car started forward. I walked along beside him: "People are people regardless of what their orientation might be," the D.A. said. "I love all people. I don't know about you."

Meanwhile, the D.A.'s office in San Francisco is prosecuting a Free Pregnancy Center in the city, charging it with "unfair business practices" because its advertisement in the Yellow Pages failed to say that abortion is *not* among the services it offers. They lure in these young ladies, you see, give them free pregnancy tests and suggest an alternative to abortion. And for this they are being prosecuted by this man who loves-all-people.

On average, there are three AIDS deaths and nineteen abortion deaths a day in San Francisco.

KOOP FOR CZAR! That sign was being carried aloft between a contingent of transvestites and transsexuals. C. Everett Koop is the Surgeon General who touted condoms for homosexuals but would never be so foolish as to advocate filter-tipped cigarettes for smokers. But Koop wanted to be loved by the liberals, and now he is touted for Czar. In May, Koop released a report condemning tobacco as "addicting," much as heroin and cocaine are addicting.

Koop might consider the possibility that homosexual acts are also addicting. And that condoms aren't "safe," exactly. A recent University of California test of eight condom brands showed five to be of apparently questionable effectiveness. "But the findings have been withheld from public release on the orders of Surgeon General C. Everett Koop," according to Allan Parachini of the *Los Angeles Times*. "One in ten of those condoms tested leaked in each brand, except for the Contracept Plus, which leaked virus ten of the 25 times it was tested."

Here, then, is Koop's pragmatism. Condoms were advocated because they "worked" (no time to delay because of moral hang-ups: our boys are dying out there), but when new evidence suggests this is not a very pragmatic solution after all, Koop will hide the evidence rather than abandon his position. The Surgeon General has also urged a ban on vending-machine sales of cigarettes, but not of condoms. Maybe he will change his mind if someone gets AIDS and claims he used condoms but was misled by the man in the nice white admiral's uniform. Koop won the Strange New Respect Award in 1987 for alienating his conservative friends. Evidently now he doesn't want to jeopardize his new-found liberal allies.

So now it's KOOP FOR CZAR and RIGHTFULLY PROUD, along with the D.A., the Mayor, and the Congresswoman, as wave after wave of the oppressed minority came strutting down Market Street, the signs reading AFFIRMATION MORMONS and SUPER-

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Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent and a media fellow at the Hoover Institution. His new book,* The Electric Windmill: An Inadvertent Autobiography *(Regnery Gateway), is reviewed by William McGurn on page 43 of this issue.*

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VISOR CAROL RUTH SILVER and LICK BUSH and . . . oh-oh, here comes an oppressed subset, NAMBLA, the North American Man Boy Love Association, a pedophile network that advocates the abolition of age-of-consent laws regulating sexual activity with children. NAMBLA believes "that children should have the right to have sex even in infancy," according to a story in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "It is an organization that promotes child sexual abuse," according to a sergeant in the San Francisco Police Department.

The NAMBLA contingent was not so far behind the D.A. in his Chrysler, but too far, alas, for me to run ahead and ask Mr. Smith whether he loved NAMBLA too, or would consider prosecuting them along with the Free Pregnancy Center.

"The Right to Say No Is the Right to Say Yes," read one NAMBLA sign. "Love Is *Not* Abuse: So Love Everybody," read another. One man ambled with NAMBLA carrying a sign saying that he had been "loved" as a child and that it hadn't done *him* any harm. All he now wanted was to do unto others . . .

Along came the Bay Area Sado-Masochist Community, hooded in black leather, clanking down the street in their chains while the whips cracked and the drums rolled around them.

On one float a chorus was singing: "We are gentle, loving people. We are gay and lesbian people. We are singing for our lives. We are gay and lesbian people, we are gentle, loving people . . ."

"Curb Your Dogma," admonished the Gay and Lesbian Atheists, while the Sierra Club's Gay and Lesbian Sierrans had a good word for the trees. The "Christian Intolerance Brigade," mostly ladies dressed to mock, carried such signs as "Sperms Are People, Too."

The political goal of many homosexuals used to be libertarianism—to get government off their backs. Now that they have seen how easily government can be intimidated, whether Republican or Democratic, they want to get government onto everyone else's backs. Homosexuals have to a large extent joined up with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition of the Aggrieved and posture disingenuously as the bitter opponents of Michael Dukakis because he has yielded to all their demands except one (recognition as foster parents). Having won *de facto* recognition as Designated Victims with trough privileges, homosexuals now holler for a larger trough, in the form of ever-broader "non-discrimination" statutes whose effect is to socialize the costs of their high-risk sexual practices.

This they have done in California, with a law preventing insurance companies from using the HIV antibody test in assessing whether to write individual life- or health-insurance policies. This denial creates room for deception, obviously, since the virus can be detected by the patient, anonymously, long before any AIDS symptoms appear. A virus carrier who knows that he tests positive, and knows that insurance companies are legally denied this information, can take out a large life insurance policy and "establish an estate" for his heirs, as an insurance consultant in Sacramento told me. It is believed that some people with AIDS have used the California law to deceive their insurers in this way. I am told that one or two insurance companies will not write large life insurance policies in California as a result.

An attempt will be made in Sacramento this summer to change the law, and an initiative by Rep. William Dannemeyer to the same effect will be on the California ballot in November. The initiative is opposed by the California Medical Association, the American Civil Liberties Union and by National Gay Rights Advocates, among others. Howls of outrage about "discrimination on the basis of sexual preference" have in recent years proved so successful at cowing into submission the vast, take-it-on-the-chin majority of Americans

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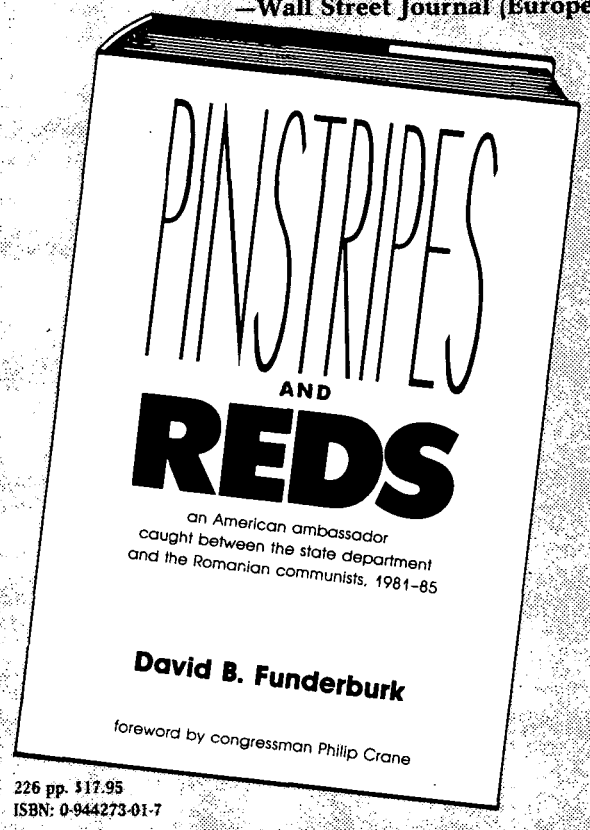
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that no doubt there will be renewed howling and that it will again prevail.

And straights *are* the vast majority. The homosexual population of San Francisco was estimated at 69,000, or slightly less than one-tenth of the city's population, in 1984. The following year, in a study by the University of California, the estimate was reduced to 42,500. Health officials now tactfully use an average of the two, and estimate the numbers carrying the AIDS virus by guessing that 50 percent of the homosexual population is infected. (In San Francisco, about 98 percent of those who do carry the virus are homosexual or bisexual.)

It's worth noting that all these figures may be too high. Recently, the New York City Health Department reduced *by four-fifths* its estimate of the number of homosexual men in New York City infected with the AIDS virus (from 250,000 to 50,000), and the estimate of the number of homosexuals in New York City was likewise reduced by four-fifths, from 500,000 to 100,000. These far smaller figures were immediately treated as controversial by gay advocacy groups. "Groups representing homosexual and bisexual men were especially disturbed," Bruce Lambert reported in the *New York Times*, because "the methodology" suggested that the homosexual population in a city of 7.2 million was only 100,000. "That number, gay leaders say, is absurdly low, and it invalidates the analysis, in their view."

In general homosexual activists have for years wanted to believe, and have wanted the world to believe, that their numbers were large and forever increasing. Therefore they eagerly accepted estimates of the homosexual population made by the 1948 Kinsey Survey of Sexual Behavior in the Human Male. A brochure handed out at San Francisco's gay pride parade claimed that "about ten percent of the world's population is homosexual," this footnoted to Kinsey. "A community the size of Des Moines, Iowa, for example, with a population of 194,000, contains about 20,000 Gay citizens." (And if you believe that . . .)

Numbers translate into political strength, of course, and so lower numbers threaten a loss of political strength. Dr. Stephen Joseph of the New York City AIDS Task Force noted "the discomfort around what others see as the political implications of the [reduced] figures." But more important, homosexuality itself becomes an ideological cause for those who publicly avow it. And so for them a reduction in numbers implies a lost cause or a losing one.

There is irony in this because homosexual activists have long promoted the simultaneous idea that "homosexuality is deep seated and not something that one chooses to be or not to be," to quote Dr. Alan Bell, senior author of the 1981 study, *Sexual Preference*. Nonetheless, you only have to observe a gay parade in San Francisco for five minutes, the NAMBLA contingent in particular, to realize that many homosexuals really do want others to "choose" their "preference."

And that is why I call homosexuality an addiction. Because some people do try it, tentatively at first, as a juvenile might a cigarette, and despite initial distaste soon find that they are hooked. I think it is also true to say that for a fair number, homosexuality (like smoking) is an addiction that they dislike. And that is why there is an organization called Exodus International, founded in 1976, which seeks to "communicate the message of liberation from homosexuality through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ."

Last month Exodus held a conference in Los Angeles, but this is not fit to print, exactly. There's a news blackout on the organization and its goals. But one man, a Reagan appointee, is well suited to giving it (rather than condoms) some publicity. How about it, Doctor Koop? □

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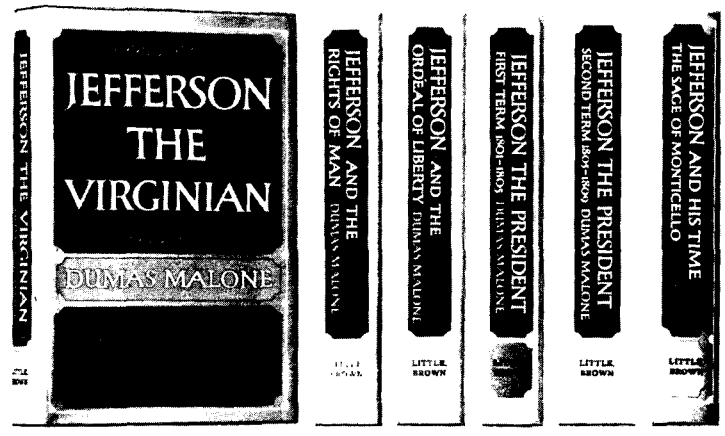

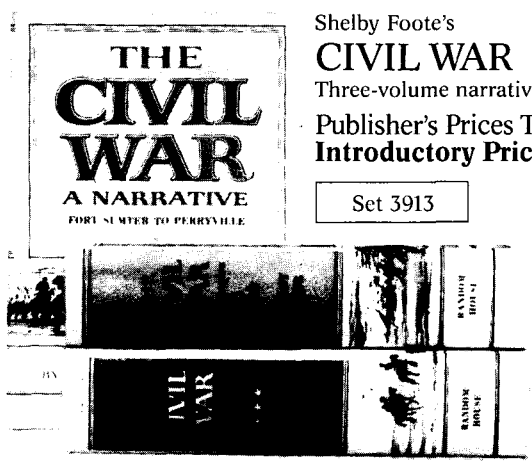

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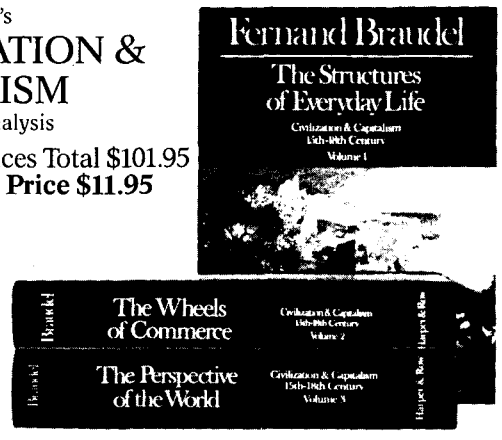

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Philip Terzian

YOU CAN HAVE HIM

New England can't stand Dukakis;
now it's our turn to suffer.

Providence, Rhode Island

We have a dilemma here in New England, and it comes down to this: Shall we elect Michael Dukakis to the White House, and rid ourselves of his scolding presence, or should we guarantee the Bay State yet another decade of the Massachusetts Miracle? It is a difficult decision.

On the one hand, there is something perversely appealing about Dukakis as President: like Jimmy Carter a dozen years ago, a living reproach to the judgment of the electorate. On the other hand, this is a question of values: Why should the country suffer for the follies of Massachusetts?

Out of the great tradition he comes, of Edward Kennedy and Edward Markey, of Gerry Studds and Barney Frank, of Joe Kennedy II and Francis X. Bellotti, of Robert Drinan, S. J. and Thomas P. O'Neill—rogues and peasant slaves, no doubt, but they're ours, not yours, and not fit for export.

So imagine, if you will, Michael Dukakis as Commander-in-Chief: greeting the Easter Seal poster child in the Rose Garden, addressing the nation with Kitty's portrait on the bookcase, flying to Brussels to set the Europeans straight, inviting Cousin Olympia to read Homer in the East Room, invoking mandatory seat belt legislation for Guam.

Think of that sneer when reporters get impertinent; conjure up a picture of Dukakis on a battleship; conceive of his State of the Union address; open up *USA Today* and find Archbishop Tutu on the Oval Office sofa, Ramsey Clark with the Medal of Freedom, Laurence Tribe on the High Court bench. Laugh if you may, but cry when you will.

The truth of the matter is that, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. notwithstanding, the Democrats have remembered much, but learned very little. Not since Franklin Roosevelt has a Democratic President served two full terms in happy succession. No Democratic President since Dallas has held office without being challenged by the Kennedy clan. The greatest foreign policy catastrophe of modern American history—Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam war—has tumbled down the memory hole, while the greatest domestic policy disaster—Lyndon Johnson's Great Society—is remembered with affection.

And invoked with a vengeance: For what is the substance behind those gorgeous generalities but more and better spending, Marshall Plans for the cities, for the family farms, the interstate highways, bridges, aqueducts, aquifers, community colleges, the day-care centers and welfare hotels, numerical quotas for Native Americans, the Differently Abled, Quakers, Aleuts, dykes on bikes, sociologists, writers-in-residence, veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade?

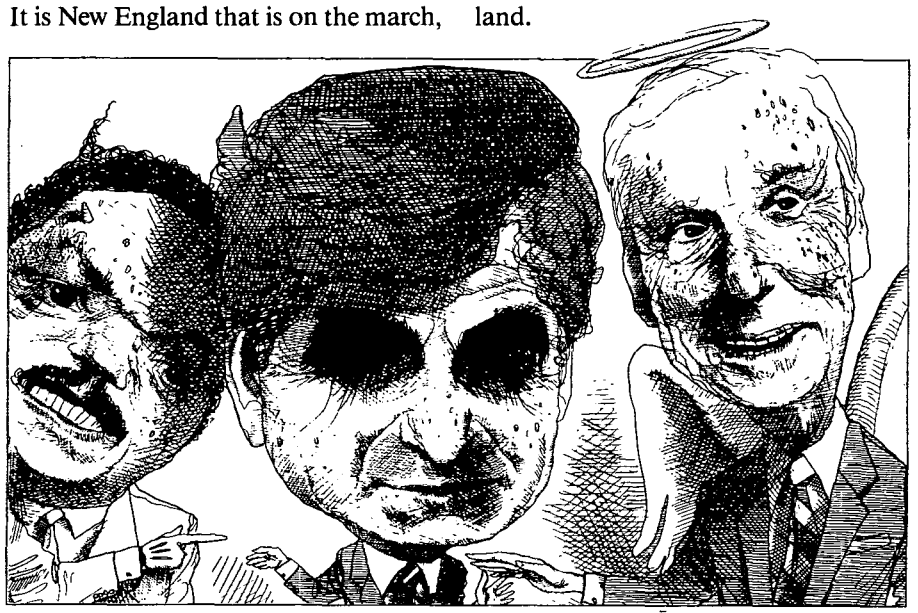
Yet make no mistake: the Massachusetts Miracle is not strength but resilience, the capacity of the Bay State to suffer such taxation, regulation, prohibition, interdiction, prevention, proscription, impediments, obstructions, and harassment as Dukakis and his brain trust could throw in its path.

The economy has not prevailed, but endured; not flourished, but kept pace. It is New England that is on the march, not Massachusetts, and Michael Dukakis has had the hapless Edward King to thank for good luck, the *Boston Globe* to thank for good ink, the Republican party to thank for free rides, and Caspar Weinberger to thank for investment.

And when the Pentagon budget is cut down to size, and Route 128 looks ragged and worn, Michael Dukakis will be several hundred miles in safety from Boston.

Yes, it is unlikely that President Dukakis could create the sort of people's republic that has made his home state the envy of Tanzania, a 1980s replica of 1940s Britain. But let us not count on small favors, hope for the best, or imagine that legislative history repeats.

A Democratic President cannot bring a Democratic Congress to heel—John Kennedy and Jimmy Carter proved that with aplomb—but the right combination of factors could work. Put another New England ideologue—say, George Mitchell of Maine—in the majority leader's chair, keep James Wright compliant, populate the Cabinet with mid-level refugees from the Carter Administration, and *voila!* the witch's brew is stirring in the pot, the spirit of Salem is felt throughout the land.



It can't happen here? It has happened before—and if Michael Dukakis bears more than a resemblance to his Democratic predecessor, it ought to be remembered that the things which made us guffaw about poor Jimmy were soon shoved aside by his serious intent. It is dangerous to be amused by Democratic Presidents, for what seems funny to us is plausible to them, and what is plausible to us is hilarious in their view.

And Michael Dukakis has bought it all, and more: caviling at the "inordinate fear of Communism," the apologetic tone, the settling of scores, the certainty of righteousness, the dubious associates, the suspicion of the West, the sense of a nation unworthy of his leadership, the conviction that malaise is what ails us all, American belligerence, intransigence, bigotry, and violence. He's got it all down.

It is not for nothing that those dreadful years in exile, the years when Massachusetts scrambled to its feet, were spent at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. This is, after all, a bachelor of arts of Swarthmore College, a master of ceremonies from PBS, a legislator weaned in a one-party state, a man for all seasons in our icy Boston winters.

In those rarefied circles, everything is obvious because everyone agrees; nothing is uncertain because everybody says so. To be a Democrat in Massachusetts is to take refuge in numbers: Join the party, curry favor, gain some leverage, hand out money, hire planners, earn a *dacha*, bleed the bourgeoisie.

If the Republicans were anything other than an assortment of cranks, occasional ambitious office boys, aristocrats in hiding, reserved and austere, a fisherman or two, and dozens of devotees of prayer in public schools, the circumstances would be something other than tragic.

For Michael Dukakis is, if nothing else, a New England Jimmy Carter: dark where the late president is light, but tousle-haired, short, stiff and unre-

Philip Terzian is chief editorial writer of the Providence Journal.

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sponsive, fixing his audience with Frigidaire eyes, lulling his listeners in monotonous tones, raising his voice in the middle of his sentences, emphasizing syllables for no apparent reason, chopping the air with clammy hands, forgetting where the phrases end and paragraphs begin, jumping at the jugular, reacting with venom, careful to make sure that the vanquished will hurt.

An aged mother, an iron-willed wife, a lunatic brother,[1] a Kirbo named Brountas—the parallels persist. But even where they break down, the comparison is unflattering. For Jimmy Carter, at least, balanced the Georgia budget on more than one occasion. In Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis has imposed his special brand of solvency by routinely raising taxes, or levying new tariffs where Democrats don't live. And even this year, when his fiscal austerity has become a badge of honor, the Commonwealth has fallen in a half-billion-dollar hole, assisted by his loyal legislative servants, covered with a loin cloth of new and better taxes.

But if Carter's buffoonery made him ultimately vulnerable, there is in Dukakis a colder vein of iron. The governor does not like criticism, largely because he is unaccustomed to it, and in the course of a presidential campaign, he is likely to encounter more than his share. This is not apt to endear him to the electorate, who prefer a semblance of humor in their emperors, or at least some evidence of make-believe humility.

His response, I should say, is invariably hostile: There is in the governor a sense of confidence that seems to outweigh judgment, and it makes greater sense to Michael Dukakis to slap down dissent with the back of his hand than acknowledge mistakes, or even seek out consensus. A tip of the hat is not the governor's style; it's "this crowd in the White House" or "the clowns around Reagan."

I leave it to the psychoanalysts to explain why this should be, but no one who has watched him in action for very long can fail to observe it. Criticism is "garbage," he says, teeth clenched, eyes flashing. The sentences become short, sharp, pointed, deadly. Sarcasm creeps between the lines, contempt oozes through the curled lips, the neck grows red, the mouth twists, the eyes narrow, the temperature drops.

It is a formidable thing to see, and whether you are the widow of a victim of a furloughed murderer, or a mayor who has not bowed quite deeply enough, the lash of the squire can be painful indeed. This sort of thing works well enough in Massachusetts, but it would be interesting to see how it plays on Capitol Hill. There the antics are nearly as disheartening, but not quite so juvenile, as in Boston, Massachusetts. The ethical vapors smell largely the same, but the volume is greater: Congress is a giant casino, Beacon Hill a corner crap game.

Remember Joseph Biden—the Saint George of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the statesman from Delaware who slew Judge Robert Bork? It was Michael Dukakis and his black prince, John Sasso, who slipped the deadly videotape of a plagiarizing Biden into reportorial hands.

This was not the first time Mr. Sasso had done his master's bidding: When Dukakis ran to regain the State House in 1982, his minions manufactured a pornographic movie, fraudulent but effective, featuring the wife of his primary opponent, the First Lady of the Commonwealth. It premiered at the *Globe*; Dukakis kept his distance. →

[1]Baptized Stelian, a manic-depressive. During his lucid intervals he would walk the streets of Brookline, distributing campaign literature hostile to his brother. Deceased, alas, in a mysterious motoring accident.

Something's fishy offshore

Turnabout, the adage has it, is fair play. But sometimes turnabout produces a delicious irony, if not a red face or two.

Take, as a case in point, the question of offshore drilling rigs. For decades now, their deployment has followed a ritualistic pattern, like the mating dance of the whooping crane.

The dance begins at some point after an oil company proposes to begin developing an oil lease it has paid good money for at a government auction. The company has prepared and submitted a detailed environmental impact statement and other assorted documents of impressive heft and bulk. That's usually when some group complains that drilling rigs are unsightly, messy, and will undoubtedly foul the seas and destroy the fish that dwell therein. There usually follows a period of legal skirmishing and, for the oil company, costly delay.

Now, according to a recent story in a major newspaper, some environmental groups are doing a turnabout. They are actually opposing the removal of rigs from their perches above played out oil fields. The reason: Over the length of their working lives, the rigs have been found to provide habitats for fish and other marine life. Removing them leaves these denizens homeless and hungry, and leaves fishermen with empty creels.

The article points out that oil companies are caught in a dilemma. International law requires some rigs to be removed after they cease production. In the U.S., all federal leases mandate removal within one year. Furthermore, the U.S. Navy warns that such rigs can offer hiding places not only for finny friendlies, but also for less-amiable submarines. Besides, says the Navy, an abandoned rig is a navigational hazard.

On the other hand (dilemmas have at least two) officials in both the Interior and Commerce departments would like to see at least some of the rigs left in place. Failing that, they'd like the rigs transported to any of the artificial reefs that already dot the ocean precisely to encourage underwater critters to set up housekeeping. Economics also colors industry thinking; it's obviously cheaper to leave a rig in place than to demolish it, or even tow it to an underwater housing development.

As for the delicious irony, try this morsel from the same news story: The very rig responsible for the fabled Santa Barbara oil leak in 1969, thereby giving rise to the no-rig-is-a-good-rig movement, is today a source of delight for finicky palates.

The rig is still producing—oil and also mussels and other creatures that grow on its very legs. One entrepreneur has for some time been harvesting the mussels, along with others from nearby rigs, and selling them at premium price to the poshest places because they contain none of the grime found in their brethren from less desirable neighborhoods.

Seriously, folks, here are the questions we'd like to pose. If rigs are the bane of the environmental movement, by what logic can environmentalists mourn their demise? Or could it be that rigs—and offshore drilling—aren't so bad after all?

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Six years later, when the Biden tape was circulated, the governor was similarly indignant and discreet. True to form, he suggested here and there that the hapless Richard Gephardt had sent the tape around. Of course, as nearly everyone suspected, it was Sasso who had done the work, the governor knew it, and knew about it early, and pretended to temporize—and then jettisoned John Sasso.

Sasso was succeeded in time by Susan Estrich, a 35-year-old Harvard Law School instructor, the wife of a Disney studio executive, Martin Kaplan by name, who used to write speeches for candidate Walter Mondale. Miss Estrich is a battle-scarred veteran of such Democratic triumphs as Edward Kennedy's presidential quest (1980) and Geraldine Ferraro's campaign staff (1984).

And Governor Dukakis, who initially seemed no better than a dime-store Machiavelli, soon found himself lavished with generous praise: He had acquired the first woman campaign manager in presidential history, whose name adorns the short list for Supreme Court nominations.

So, out they went—Gary Hart, Albert Gore, Jesse Jackson, Richard Gephardt—one by one. And here they come—Lloyd Bentsen, the gentleman from Texas who won't even get to attend foreign funerals, John Sasso, still handling the strings, Kitty, wielding veto power, and Robert Reich and Joseph Nye and Mary Frances Berry and Charles William Maynes—O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.

It is our conviction in New England that suffering is healthy, that self-mortification is bran flakes for the soul, that the road less traveled, the better mousetrap, early to bed and early to rise make a man President, if not wealthy and wise. If they want him, we deserve him—and from the tip of the Berkshires to the depths of Buzzards Bay, from Mount Desert Island to the peaks of Darien, please take him with our compliments, but take him away. □

Andrew Ferguson

THE PEACHTREE PARTY

Our man in Atlanta reports on Democrats playing make-believe.

Atlanta is a warm city—that is, after you have proved your right to share its warmth. Her people are cordial, once you have been accepted, and the cordiality is genuinely sincere. . . . After a period of being cordial and friendly yourself, you gradually realize you have been accepted, and it is then that you feel the warm arms of this bighearted city around your shoulders and find that you, too, have fallen in love with her.
—from *Peachtree Parade*, page 9 [where I stopped reading], by Ernest Rogers, 1956.

It doesn't quite work that way, of course. But having trudged around downtown Atlanta under the blazing sun of high noon in the middle of July I understand the metaphor of the warm arms. And Atlantans themselves are indeed cordial, to judge by my experience at the Democratic convention, but only to the extent that they are Atlantans first and Democrats second. The most insistently cordial native I met was Lethia Lance, who buttonholed me at a fundraising party as she and her husband, Bert, were on their way out.

"I haven't met you yet!" she said, extending her hand.

Bert shot me a suspicious look and said, "C'mon, Lethia."

"Well, I'm not really a Democrat," I said.

"That doesn't matter," said Mrs. Lance. "You're a visitor! How do you like Atlanta?"

"C'mon, Lethia," Bert repeated, taking her elbow.

"What have you seen so far?"

"Lethia," said Bert.

"Have you been up to Buckhead yet? It's just like Rhett and Scarlett, only it's *real*. If you like big houses and trees, that's the place to go!"

"Lethia!" Bert tugged at her elbow.

"Do you like to shop? There's the Galleria, up by . . . "

"Lethia!" and she was gone, hauled off by her sultry husband who, as a Democrat first and an Atlantan second, had no time for pleasantries with obscure non-Democrats.

It made for an odd juxtaposition, this relentless boosterism hard up against the all-business sober-sides of the Democrats. When you saw somebody wearing a stupid hat—part of the pack gear of conventions past—chances were that it was an Atlantan wearing it to promote some homegrown product. The conventioneers stuck mostly to sports clothes (although a lot of these were stupid, too). At the end of the "revels," on Friday morning, I sought some explanation for the Democratic mood, by calling the Democratic National Convention Stress Hotline.

Bringing "behavioral soothing techniques" to any Democrat within reach of a telephone, the Hotline was the first of its kind, which surprised me. The idea seems a natural. It plays on three of the defining characteristics of the modern Democrat, who, when placed in any extraordinary circumstance, will (1) search himself carefully for signs of stress; (2) always find them; and (3) need to complain about it, preferably by "sharing" with someone who has graduate training in behavioral soothing.

Dr. Pratt, the Hotline volunteer with whom I spoke, was no help at all when it came to concocting a grand overarching theory about the Democrats' restraint in and about the convention. But he did tell me a bit about the hotline. "We were pretty familiar with the kind of stressers we were going to run into," he said. "You can have some pretty unusual reactions when you pull together 15-20,000 people for four days, and we wanted to make available a full range of psycho-social resources to respond to that."

Unfortunately, there wasn't much to respond to. "Most of the problems have been small ones," Dr. Pratt continued, "although they're not small to the individual stresser, of course. Some people have called because they've lost their room keys, let's say, or they didn't know how to call for a pizza, and wanted to know how to go about doing that." Typical Democratic brainteasers, in other words. But Dr. Pratt had also touched a side of the convention unknown to me. "One fellow called to say that he'd been a little overly involved in the drinking that sometimes goes on, and he had done some embarrassing things, and now he simply didn't want to leave his room. Another gentleman—a similar kind of thing—had woken up in a strange hotel room and had no idea how he got there."

I thanked Dr. Pratt, and told him I was glad to be reassured that at least *somebody* had a good time.

The general consensus about why the Democrats were so business-like in Atlanta is that they think they can win in November, and winning requires some semblance of seriousness, which means "moderation." Thus they reined in their own truest, goofiest selves, through sheer force of will. This is absolutely necessary. Start laughing along with a Democrat, burble over the wallet photos of his kids, tell him to loosen his tie, buy him a couple more shooters, encourage him and agree with him, and pretty soon the euphemisms drop away and instead of talking about "investing in our children" he's pledging branch offices of the Department of Education in every classroom; instead of "reproductive rights" it's abortion; instead of "the principle of pay equity for working women" it's the Federal Board of Fair Female Wage Regulation (the Hon. Eleanor Smeal, Dir.). Put all that on prime time, and it's "kiss the election goodbye."

The platform fight on Tuesday night, such as it was, illustrates the point. In his deal with Dukakis, the Rev. Jackson

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was only allowed to offer three minority planks for debate at the full convention: one calling for higher taxes on "the rich" and corporations, another pledging a "no-first-use" nuclear policy, and a third calling for a Palestinian homeland. The last was never brought to a vote, and the others were resoundingly defeated, although private polls of the delegates showed that a wide majority supported them in principle.

The tax-hike plank lost despite its ingenious phrasing: "*The Democratic Party pledges not to propose tax increases on middle and low income Americans.* Instead, we will return taxes on the very richest Americans to their 1977 levels and restore corporate taxes to their pre-Reagan levels." The emphasis is mine, but it was really theirs, too. Supporters called it the "No-Tax Plank." It was debated at the beginning of the Tuesday session, in the afternoon, so that no matter how far behind the schedule fell, the chance of prime time viewers seeing a Democrat call for a tax increase was exactly nil. Good thing, too. The pro-plank speech by Manhattan borough President David Dinkins was baldly Democrat: "This is a democratic [Democratic?] proposal," Dinkins hollered. "We should make these necessary investments and the rich and the corporations should pay."

The response, by Denver mayor Federico Pena, was baldly Democrat, too, but Democrat circa Atlanta 1988. "This tax increase proposal," said the Mayor, "is a distraction from the real issue of electing Mike Dukakis to the presidency. I don't want to throw a softball for George Bush to knock out of the park." He never did get around to saying whether he thought taxes should be raised.

For my money, the most moving elaboration of Democrat principles came on Monday night, when Garrison Keillor, Ally Sheedy, and Ed Begley, Jr.—all of them celebrities of one sort or another—took the stage to read letters from children "on the theme of 'If I Were the President.' " Keillor, who over the years has developed the amazing trick of making a wholesome Minnesota-midwestern accent sound unctuous, read a letter from the adorable David Hass of Coventon, Rhode Island: "If I were the President I would sign the treaty to get rid of nuclear arms. Then I would lower the taxes. . . . I'll throw a party once a week. Then I'd turn all the Navel, Air Force, Army and Marine bases into shopping malls. I'd turn the navel ships into cruise liners. Then I'd turn the air force planes into luxury planes. I'd get rid the army and the marines. I'd do this to make our country better." Perhaps little David is bucking for Secretary of Defense. And judging by the reaction of the assembled Democrats that Monday night, he may get it. The Democrats have made odder appointments—remember Midge Costanza?

After Ally Sheedy, the podium show was all downhill. The keynoter, Ann Richards, came off like a Texas Minnie Pearl—like a Minnie Pearl, anyway, who'd been held at gunpoint by Lord & Taylor fashion consultants. Dukakis himself scored high marks for including in his acceptance speech a few references to his dead father, maudlin touches that satisfied commentators who wanted him "to tell us who Michael Dukakis is." Much of the media—including, for obvious reasons, the *New Republic*—was excited by the good looks of John F. Kennedy, Jr., though they came as no surprise to those of us who have followed his career in the *National Enquirer, Star,* and other political journals.

By acclamation, however, it was the Rev.'s speech that reached new heights in convention performance art. I suspect that this is simply more of the white liberal condescension that has followed Jackson throughout his career: the speech was twice too long, and he tripped over several of his best lines. During the first half of his speech, in fact, he was interrupted by applause only when the house lights flared on, signaling the delegates to raise the roof. The address was stitched together almost entirely from his standard stump speeches—an LP of Jackson's Greatest Hits: three minutes of "Your Patch is Not Big Enough," two and a half of "I Just Want to Make Sense," a chorus of "We're a Better Nation than That," a brief segue into "(Let's Find Some) Common Ground" and a kick-ass live version of "They Work Every Day." To be fair, I should add that, one at a time, these are all very good democratic speeches, sure to take their place in the canon of populist bushwa. Slopped together, though, they're merely fatiguing and finally irritating: all climax and no foreplay.

The most instructive of the speechifying was Jimmy Carter's appearance at the close of the Monday session. The speech itself was a long string of non sequiturs, careening from allusions to Ed Muskie to lame jokes to Gorbachev to the familiar sententious moralism ("Change means hope—change means life"), all of it done without apparent method. But there was some substance here, too: "There have been a lot of comparisons made between Dukakis and myself," said Jimmy, and he didn't disown any of them. And he shouldn't, either. A couple of days after his speech, I went to a reunion Jimmy held for his White House staff at the Carter Presidential Center. As I walked through the crowd, glancing at the name tags, dim memories stirred: here was Leon Charney, there was Stansfield Turner, across the room was Jack Watson with Bernie Aronson—the whole crew like characters from a bad movie one had seen long ago. But most telling was how many of the Carterites wore laminated credentials from the convention reading: "Michael Dukakis, Staff."

It is a chilling thought. I spoke for a while with Ed Muskie, who said, "I suspect that a lot of young voters out there who don't remember his administration have a rather high opinion of Mr. Carter." I thought at first that he was being ironic or wry, but he was quite serious, and probably politically astute, too. The undeniable similarities between Jimmy and Dukakis will have no political value for the Republicans if the electorate has forgotten the Carter legacy. A trip to the Presidential Center is instructive in this regard. Jimmy's pouting visage is everywhere, and the various displays—"Confronting the Nuclear Threat," "Protecting the Future" (the moral equivalent of war), "Hostage Crisis"—bring the memories horribly to life.

Too much time spent there induces something akin to delirium, so after a few minutes I went outside for a smoke (the entire Carter center is a no-smoking area, of course). Jack Carter, Jimmy's son, was on the terrace, also smoking, and passing out his business cards from a slim gold case. Even here he was working the crowd! As I stood admiring this incorrigible young operator, it occurred to me that the part of the Carter saga Republicans should pay most attention to is how Jimmy got to the White House in the first place. He never campaigned on ideas, never considered *why* he should be President—only knew that he had to be. Thus as a candidate he successively assumed the shape of the fiscal conservative and the compassionate liberal, of the no-nonsense internationalist and the peacenik, with equal ease, as the need arose. His 1976 campaign was a naked pursuit of power, fueled not by thoughts of governance but by his own relentless craving.

So it is with the Duke. By bringing Lloyd Bentsen onto the ticket he has shown that for him ideology is an ancillary matter. Perhaps he understands that when Democrats are true to their ideals and make them the centerpiece of the campaign, as in 1972 and 1984, they lose, and lose big. This July in Atlanta the Democrats were willing to go along with him, and kept their traps shut. The question is, can they keep them shut till November?

I got something of an answer to that question on Sunday evening, before the convention even began. I had hopped aboard a chartered bus with a dozen or so agitators from "Justice for Janitors," a group dedicated to unionizing the janitors who sweat and strain in the fresh gleaming highrises of downtown Atlanta. Many of those buildings are owned by John Portman, and it was to Portman's house we were headed, for a demonstration. Portman is a model Democrat: a caring, loving, concerned zillionaire whose compassion moves him to donate large sums to left-wing causes so long as they keep their distance.

The bus was ready to pull out when a massive man in a sweaty T-shirt and blue jeans lumbered aboard, breathing heavily as he moved down the aisle. "I'm very hot," he said, stopping at the seat across from me. "Do you mind if I remove my shirt?" It was one of those questions that isn't really a question. He pulled the thing over his head, scratched a rash that curved around the side of his belly, and dropped his 350-lb. bulk into the seat.

He began talking about himself. "You remember the Yippie Pie Thrower of the Seventies? That was me." He played modestly with one of his ponytails. "I got William Colby, Moynihan, Abe Beame, Phyllis Schlafly. You remember? That was me." He was in town for the convention, of course. "You have to keep at the Democrats, or they forget who they are," he said. "Otherwise, they just move aside all the people they're responsible to. They become just like the Republicans."

For a long time he didn't say much; the chilled air of the bus made him drowsy, and he slipped into and out of sleep. He slept through the demonstration at Portman's house, in fact, and awoke only on the trip back to downtown Atlanta, when we stopped to gather more troops in a McDonald's parking lot and the familiar odor of frying lard drifted into the bus. "We're getting food?" he shouted, his eyes opening suddenly. When he saw we weren't he looked restless and annoyed and began talking again, giving a few pointers on pie-throwing.

"Now you don't want to hurt the subject. You're just there to make a statement, not hurt anybody. You want to *plant* it on him. Get as close as you can." He tilted his right palm upward and leaned forward in his seat. "Wait to the very last minute. Wait till the subject is right against you, almost. Then"—he pushed his palm into the back of the seat ahead of him—"you give it to him!"

I asked him if he was planning to throw any pies this week. "Nah," he said. "There's a time and place for throwing pies, and this isn't it. Our job

(continued on page 49)

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Benjamin J. Stein

TAKEOVERS AND ACQUISITIONS: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?

You first must ask: Who stands to profit?
Could it be the middlemen?

Federated, Koppers, Cal-Mat, Roper, Firestone, Resorts International, Media General, these are only some of the nearer hoofbeats from the thundering stampede of takeovers and proposed takeovers that have shaken the ground under corporate America this year. According to various reports, depending on whether you trust W. T. Grimm or the *New York Times* or someone else, the pace of mergers and acquisitions is 50 percent above last year at this time or 100 percent above last year at this time, or maybe even more than that ahead of last year at this time.

Because phenomena in economic life are often believed to have some rational cause, observers have sought and found a variety of supposed causes of the tidal mania for acquisitions.

Among the more popular of these explanations are the following:

•that corporations which are capitalized in the United States represent a great bargain for foreign investors because of the relatively low price of the dollar compared with other currencies ("relative" in this case signifying a comparison with recent times);

•that buying an already existing corporation is a cheaper way to acquire earning assets than the building up of these assets from scratch, and that therefore the purchase of already existing corporations is a special bargain compared with capital expenditures to duplicate those resources;

•in particular, that the acquisition of corporations with established good will is almost indispensable, since it is nearly impossible to create a new reservoir of good will for a new product which will be even roughly comparable with the good will which exists around an already extant successful product;

•that the days of the Reagan Administration are numbered, and that its admittedly null enforcement of antitrust laws may be replaced by sterner measures from the next administration, and that therefore someone better get while the getting is good.

Now, to be sure, all of these are interesting explanations. But, like a great many explanations, they do not really explain anything. More to the point, to the extent that these "explanations" explain anything, they often raise more questions than they answer or explain.

In particular, the takeover wave and the explanations around it raise questions about how well financial markets value investment opportunities and equilibrate forms of investment—and just what the market is doing in valuation on an ongoing basis anyway.

And finally, the explanations seem to me to miss the most fundamental point about why the deals take place at all: which has nothing to do with any of the stated explanations and everything to do with individual human ambition and need.

Consider first the foreign acquisitions and attempted acquisitions. These would include Bridgestone and Firestone, Beazer and Koppers, Brierley and Cal-Mat, and possibly Campeau and Federated (although the price of the Canadian dollar moves fairly closely with the U.S. dollar price).

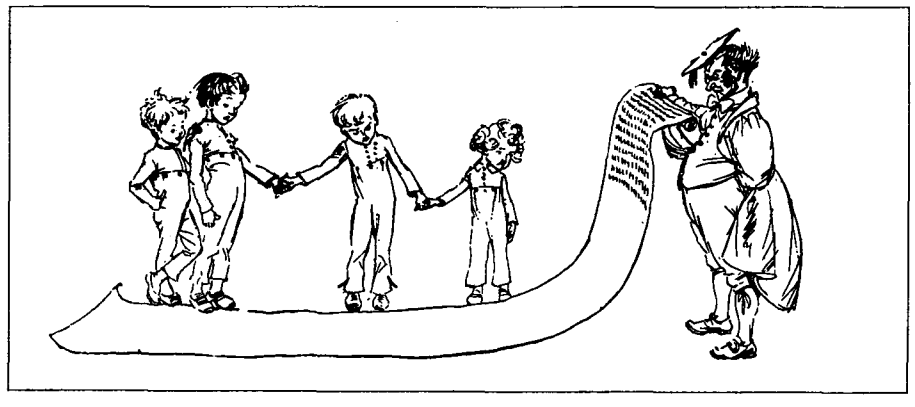
It seems to me, just as a humble hypothesis, that the explanation that these takeovers represent an irresistible bargain because the dollar is so low relative to the pound or the yen is highly suspect.

For one major thing, yes, the dollar is at a historic low (or near it) relative to the Japanese currency. But this cuts both ways. The earnings from an American acquisition will be largely, if not mostly, in dollars. When they are repatriated to Tokyo, the owners of those dollars will take a haircut exactly equal to the gain they enjoyed on buying the company in the first place. That is to say, any large benefit derived from the low dollar will be exactly offset by the same low dollar/yen ratio when the earnings from Firestone are brought back to Japan. The stream of earnings, dividends, and retained earnings will be just as heavily discounted as the purchase price of the Firestone (or other) shares were on the way in. In that case, the incredible bargain of American companies does not look like as much of a bargain.

Some suggest that the purchase of dollar-denominated assets by foreigners in fact takes that very fact into account, and is a bet that the dollar will appreciate in relation to the yen or the pound—and that therefore the purchaser would have gotten a great steal on the buy side and then on the dividend side.

The problem with that line of analysis is that it assumes that the Japanese—or British—purchasers are really just speculating on the future price movements of currencies. It is hard to believe that buying an entire large company for hundreds of millions, or even billions (in the Firestone case), of dollars just to bet on currency movements makes much sense. It would be incomparably cheaper in transaction costs, and far easier in terms of execution of the trades, simply to buy contracts in foreign currencies in the first place.

As an entire explanation, or even a large part of an explanation, the cheapness of the dollar when applied to buying a stream of dollar earnings is at best incomplete.



But a far more troublesome explanation of the mergers and acquisitions landslide has to do with the notion that buying already extant assets is a far cheaper way to acquire them than building them up from scratch. This argument defies several fundamental notions about what financial markets do—and about what growing economies do.

For one thing, unless I somehow missed something, aren't markets supposed to equilibrate the costs of building new assets as compared with buying already existing assets? Isn't that an essential function of the price mechanism as applied to capital? It is, I think, a basic piece of the free market catechism that the market will set a price on a factory which roughly equilibrates its cost with the cost of building a new similar factory. Clearly (or so it seems to me), if the market did not make that kind of adjustment, there would be an endless amount of money to be made either building new factories or buying and selling old ones—and that process itself would inevitably result in an equalization of prices.

Presumably, although there are a great many other variables, something of the same process applies to entire

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companies. If that process did not apply, people would never start new companies or would never do anything but acquire extant companies—and again, even that process would presumably set in motion some kind of equalization of price.

But as my pals the investment bankers tell me, that Adam Smith–type of analysis would be correct except for a big but: yes, anyone can build the factories and the showrooms. Yes, anyone can design a serviceable product. But (and this is the big but) there are some brand names so well established that no amount of money can acquire their level of good will among buyers.

This "explains" the fact that a Federated, with its magnificent empire of stores from Bloomingdale's to Ralph's, will, as an entire going concern, sell for so very much more than it did as a stock. Its crown jewels simply cannot be duplicated, so goes the reasoning, and that tells why a Federated, when sold as a going concern, can command almost triple its twelve-month low and almost double its "normalized" price as a stock.

But this explanation, like the foreign currency explanation, seems to me to leave out certain facts from that world we call real life. In fact, many companies which have started recently, or become national recently, have created huge amounts of good will quickly. It just is not true that a company needs to be a century old to have a consumer name worth owning.

One need only think of Apple, Compaq, Adidas, Nike, Gatorade, Häagen-Dazs, or a hundred others to realize that in fact good will can be generated rapidly with a good product and good advertising. (In fact, I would think that the advertising agencies of America would be rising as one in righteous indignation at the mere suggestion that good will could not be created by an intelligent, aggressive advertising campaign. If that grim theory were true, a large part of advertising would simply be valueless.)

In addition, the theory that there is some very large special premium attached to buying extant businesses instead of starting new ones implies that the business system has a tragic static quality to it. The notion that the American economy will not support new businesses is similar to the notion that America was in a secular decline that would continue more or less forever, and that everyone had better make the best of it. That "secular stagnation" theory was popular during the worst of the Great Depression. It was proved to be drastically incorrect then. In an economy which has been in the longest peacetime boom in history now since about 1981, the idea that there is no room for starting new businesses should be considered highly suspect indeed.

In some cases, the defenders of the theory that there is added value to buying extant businesses say that, yes, at a certain price, we could build up a business from scratch. But, these people say, the problem is that the price of buying an existing company with its already existing good will is so much lower than that of buying a new company and building it up that we must go with the already existing company.

Again, this may be true, but if it is, it mocks the notion that the markets are efficiently valuing corporations on an ongoing basis and comparing them with alternative investment opportunities. Clearly, it would be impossible in an efficient market for corporate stock of old companies to sell constantly at a discount relative to the stock of new companies—otherwise the demand for that stock would itself bid up the price of the extant companies until it was in the same league with that of the new companies or the cost of starting them.

In fact, we've seen that phenomenon at work more or less constantly every day this year. An acquirer will start to buy a company at price X, which pre-

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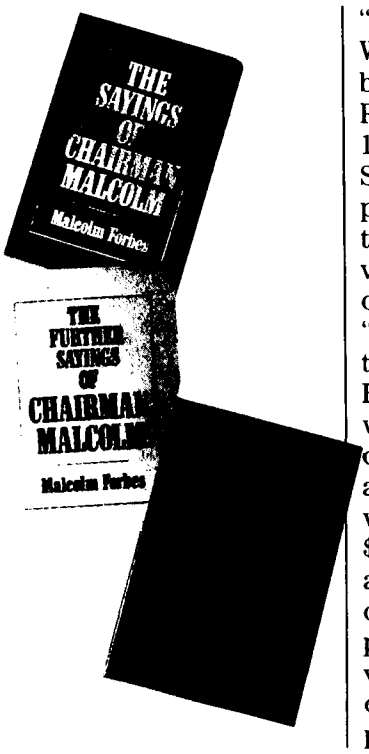

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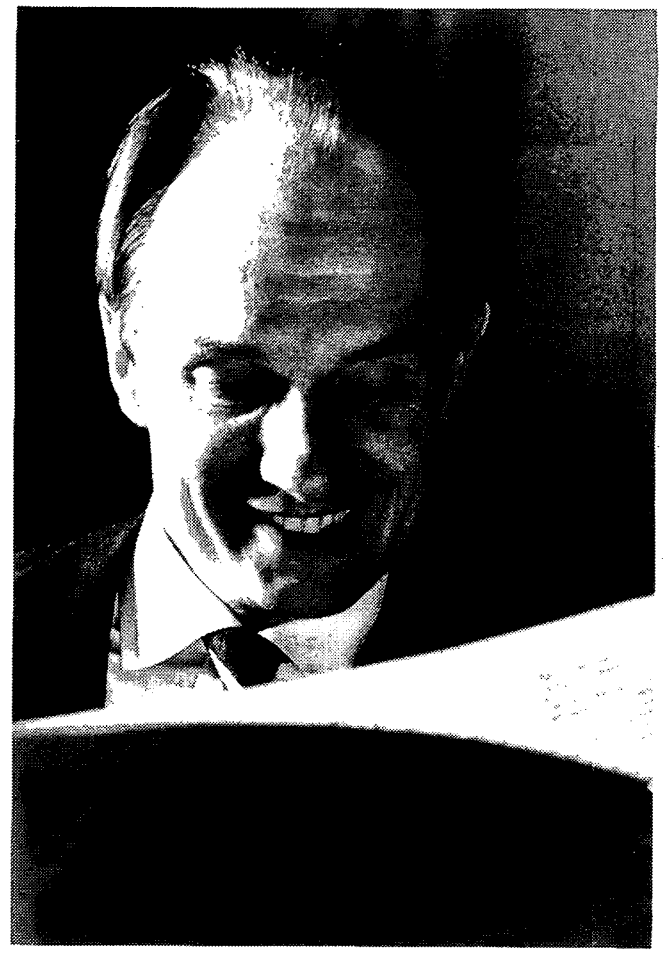

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sumably is a price cheaper than the price of buying new assets. Then other bidders enter the field and the price rapidly rises far above the original price.

Is the already extant company still a great bargain compared with starting a new company? If its capitalization doubles in price, is it still cheaper than building a new company? At what level in the bidding contest is it no longer cheaper to buy already existing good will? Or, once the bidding begins, does that calculation about building from scratch somehow fly out the window?

Or, to take an even more basic look at the problem, how can it be that a company will be selling at 26, as Koppers was a few months ago, and then have its price go to 55, and still be a bargain? Would it still be a bargain at 110? Is it always a bargain if someone is willing to pay for it?

Or, to look at it another way, if it is still a bargain at 55, how could the market have been so grossly incorrect in valuing it before the takeover came along? What was the market doing with Federated and Cal-Mat and Koppers and Firestone all of those years and months? Why was the market so completely unable to see what the "real" price of the stock should have been?

Investment bankers would presumably reply that a company has one value when you own a hundred shares of its stock and another when you own 100 percent of its stock. I am not sure exactly why that should be true, but even if it is true, the question really is, by which calculation is it worth more?

Certainly, we have seen over and over again that when individuals take a company private, they are able to squeeze vastly more money out of it than the public stockholders ever saw. But what we often see in today's rash of takeovers is public companies buying other public companies. That is an entirely different situation, and there is no clear evidence that public stockholders acquiring a company do anywhere near as well as corporate executives taking their own company private.

In fact, there is evidence from a study by Murray Weidenbaum, the former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, and Stephen Vogt, a senior fellow of the Washington University Center for the Study of American Business, distinctly to the contrary. Weidenbaum and Vogt recently published a monograph entitled *Takeovers and Stockholders: Winners and Losers*. This study followed a large number of takeover situations involving public companies on both ends in the last five years. The study found that in general, the shareholders of target firms tend to be winners in that their stock price goes up after an acquisition and their economic utility is increased. However, the study found exactly the opposite effects in terms of the stockholders of the acquiring companies. Their stock values rarely rose in any way that could be related to the takeover. The Weidenbaum and Vogt data showed that "on average, acquiring firm shareholders are not as fortunate [as target firm shareholders]. At best, these shareholders are no worse off, but often they lose during acquisitions" in terms of the total return on their shareholdings of the acquiring firm.

Indeed, the anecdotal evidence once again weighs in heavily in favor of skepticism about the value to acquiring shareholders of major acquisitions of public companies. It is difficult to think of many major acquisitions by public companies *of* public companies that have enriched shareholders of the acquiring firm. (Indeed, Weidenbaum and Vogt note that, interestingly enough, the managers of acquiring companies tend to "promote the interests of a select group of shareholders to whom they have no obligation, at the same time neglecting those they were hired to serve.")

The final argument that appears supporting the wave of mergers and acquisitions is that the buyers better get while the getting is good. The Reagan Administration is on its way out, and the next President may rigorously enforce the antitrust laws, or so the theory goes.

The problem with that is twofold: if the purchases do not make economic sense anyway, the lack of restraint by the Department of Justice should not encourage buyers to make a bad deal. Second, there is no shrieking from either Vice President Bush or Governor Dukakis about screwing down on antitrust enforcement. As far as I can see, at least for the moment, antitrust is an idea whose time has come—and gone.

Now, this leaves something of a muddle in the middle of a puddle, but there is a way out. Yes, the wave of takeovers seems to fly in the face of the notion of efficient markets. (But then these days what doesn't fly in the face of that notion, at least on a company by company basis, if not on the basis of macro studies?) Yes, the explanations of why foreigners are buying leave a great deal to be desired. And, yes, the basic idea that buying already extant assets is worth far more than building from scratch is both self-contradictory and contradicted by the evidence.

But the reason, I suggest, that all of these theories fail to pay off is that they are theories about markets and currencies and, most of all, that they are theories based upon other theories.

In fact, I suggest that you can learn more about the causes of the recent wave of mergers and acquisitions by studying a market made up of *people*. In particular, the financial markets are made up of *people* who like to make money. Many of those people and the firms at which they work have seen drastic declines in trading income. They have seen startling gaps in the once solid wall of institutional avarice for equities. They have seen some financings that were on the floor go up onto the shelf.

If a company is still a bargain at 55, how could the market have been so grossly incorrect in valuing it before the takeover came along?

At the same time, they have become addicted to a truly huge flow of income. These *people* have to reconcile their huge need for income to feed their infrastructures and their own families in Southampton. The immediate resolution is to generate more income some other way.

Where do huge injections of money come from? What is the equivalent of China White for an investment banker? Mergers and acquisitions. Where else can a few weeks and months of meetings become leveraged into percentage points of major industrial companies? Where else but M & A? Where else are the deals so huge that even getting a few points off the top is tens of millions of dollars?

There is no valid free market economic theory which explains why an acquiring entity should seek a whole extant corporation instead of building one from scratch. Indeed, free market theory says that such a situation is impossible in all but the shortest run. There is no wealth of real world information that says that acquiring large extant companies instead of building them from scratch makes economic sense for the acquirers.

But—and this is a huge but—anyone who can do long division can tell you that it makes tremendous sense *for the salesman on commission* to sell the whole company. Where is the engine that powers buying and selling whole corporations instead of building them up year by year? Personal gain by the few.

Milton Friedman, the Nobel Prize–winning economist-seer, has long postulated that the maximum of effort and success accrues to efforts in society that are waged by the smallest number of people—because the rewards per person are so huge. How else explain why a few lobbyists can displace millions of voters? How else explain the former China lobby or the present pro-Glass-Steagall lobby?

James Buchanan won his Nobel Prize for something called the "theory of public choice." In essence, that theory simply said that in matters of public policy, you can foretell the outcome by looking at the self-interest of the public politicians involved, not at the interests of constituents or of the public weal.

If one combines the Friedman theory about the inverse ratio of power to numbers, and the direct ratio of gain per person to the success of the effort, with the Buchanan theory of public choice—and then transfer them to the corporate sector—you might come close to generating a workable theory about the present wave of mergers and acquisitions.

There is enormous, overwhelming self-interest on the part of the people who sell and finance these deals. That self-interest lies entirely in trying to sell whole companies rather than selling a lousy 100 million bonds here or there. What self-respecting investment banker of 1988 would even hint that there should be slow steady sales of bonds with a payoff to the investment banker of one-quarter percent when he could sell the whole billion dollar thing and get two percent off the top? Who in his right mind would ever recommend to a corporate client anything *but* buying and selling whole corporations?

The burden of self-interest on the part of present day Wall Street is in persuading flush purchasers to buy corporations. The weight of history suggests that self-interest, especially on Wall Street, is worth any number of theories about foreign currencies, the impossibility of building new good will, the relative "cheapness" of existing assets—even when the bidding for them doubles their price.

Once the self-interest of the investment bankers is clearly defined, it is easily within their power to make up theories about why it really is not just the investment bankers' self-interest that is at work, but larger, more impersonal economic forces, market forces, forces that do not run off the gain of the middleman. If those theories don't make sense, the middleman has the wherewithal to generate new ones.

In the meantime, as a young investment banker at Drexel Burnham Lambert told me last week, "the deals go on, and that's really what it's all about." □

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James Ring Adams

LOSING THE DRUG WAR: DRUGS, BANKS, AND FLORIDA POLITICS

Narcotics trading flourishes in the Sunshine State not only because of demand, but also because it is a major source of campaign and other political funding. If the pols won't lead the fight against drugs, who will?

The War on Drugs has mushroomed into one of the nation's biggest issues. Scare commercials and pious indignation fill the airwaves. The White House repeats the folly of Prohibition with its ill-conceived policy of "zero tolerance." But very few in this furor are willing to look closely at the real ecology of the drug trade. The narcotics traffic flourishes not only because of demand, but because of tacit acceptance by elements of the political structure.

Like the old-time Mafia, the drug trade does best where it can work out a fix with government—with local police chiefs, with bank supervisors, with any bureaucrat able to crimp its operations. The fix is especially urgent for the financial side of narcotics. The traffickers have to move incredible sums of cash. This task requires an elaborate infrastructure of bank accounts, dummy corporations, and "flexible" financiers. Prosecutions have been most successful when they followed the cash. According to Stanley Marcus, former U.S. attorney and now federal judge in Miami, "The big boys hardly ever touch the drugs, but they always touch the money." Yet amid the distasteful condescension and self-serving rhetoric of the recent White House Conference for a Drug-Free America, money laundering was almost a forbidden topic.

The case of Florida shows how sensitive a topic narcotics cash can be. Since the mid-seventies, money laundering has become an entrenched feature of the state's economy. It's almost as if a financial network arose in tandem with the consolidation of the Colombian cocaine and marijuana cartels. This network has survived in spite of individual arrests and bank insolvencies because it has found a niche in the state's political eco-system. Fortunes are being made and a new social elite is arising on the flood of drug money. If Florida is on the front-lines of the Drug War, a large part of it has been captured by the enemy. Some of its unique features have made it vulnerable, but nothing that has happened there can't happen to some degree in the rest of the country, and it probably has.

The swarthy Hispanic "narcotraffi-cantes" are just as villainous as their stereotype, no doubt about it. But, as they like to insist, at least they aren't hypocrites like the respectable bankers, lawyers, and politicians who thrive on their cash. The drug dealers, as we shall see, move in an underside of politics that is far sleazier, and far more comfortable for them, than one might ever expect.

I. THE CORRUPTORS

"El Gran Corruptor de Hialeah"

Alberto San Pedro, Dade County's leading political philosopher, is winning the battle for restoration of his public reputation. After a six-month trial on thirty-nine counts involving drugs, bribery, and attempted murder, a six-person jury convicted him of only seven charges. An apologetic *Miami Herald*, dismissing his tape-recorded claims of state-wide political influence, awarded him a "luke-warm victory." The local man for the *New York Times*, rewriting the *Herald* article, concluded with a local judge's claim that "this case has been totally blown out of proportion."

To the contrary, the real scandal in the San Pedro case may well be its tepid political impact. San Pedro, 38, started out as a petty thug who, by his own account, specialized in robbing drug dealers. By his force of personality and lavish political contributions, he turned himself into a local political power. He was able to control assignments within the police force of Hialeah, an 85-percent Hispanic enclave on Miami's northwest frontier. A good portion of the Dade County judiciary accepted invitations to his annual bash in honor of a saint from the Cuban version of voodoo. He could get a personal appeal taped to Governor Bob Graham's shaving mirror and move a grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ronald Reagan's White House had him on its "A" list of Hispanic leaders.

That's not a bad showing for the stocky, sparsely educated former strong-arm man who was once accused, in a confidential parole commission report, of being "one of the top 10 cocaine dealers in Dade County." San Pedro came to the U.S. from Cuba in 1955 at the age of five, not one of the "Mariels" he liked to point out. By the ninth grade he had begun a career in extortion, said his parole file, "making the other students do his homework." By the time he was 21, he had a long rap sheet and a reputation for violence, which he now complains was grossly exaggerated. There's a story that he once responded to a rough tackle in a neighborhood football game by shooting up the field with a machine gun. "That was a bunch of sh--," he said, in a bugged conversation. "It was a f--ing rifle that I shot automatically, on semi-automatic."

In 1971, his gang tried to rip off drug dealers who were actually undercover police. He was convicted for murder conspiracy and sentenced to three years probation. Four years later, a would-be hit-man shot him five times outside his house. After San Pedro regained his health (and the hit-man disappeared), he turned to politics and became a devotee of St. Lazarus, the patron of healing in Santeria, the Cuban folk religion. He kept a nine-foot-tall plaster statue of the saint in his house, and each year on the saint's day in mid-December took it to the ballroom of a posh Miami Beach hotel for a party that attracted dozens of local judges, police chiefs, and politicos. San Pedro's influence grew by other means, especially after a Mafia hood emerged from a lunch date with a bullet wound in the elbow. San Pedro smoothed over the incident through his connections with a Gambino family *capo regime* named Joseph D. Paterno, and afterward, the mob stayed out of Hialeah.

San Pedro had amazing control over the Hialeah Police Department, through his friendship with its chief and many of its officers. "That chief would do anything he said," marvels Nelson Perry, president of the Dade County Police Benevolent Association. Perry infiltrated San Pedro's clique, posing as a corrupt cop, and he describes a town where honest cops had a rough life. "They were told to stay away from certain places at certain times," says Perry. "If San Pedro said, 'get your man moved, he's giving us trouble,' he'd wind up in the Property Room."

But San Pedro's most impressive legacy consists of 900 tapes of conversations recorded by the Metro-Dade police. Interspersed with the sounds of vacuum cleaners and crying children, they epitomize the political

James Ring Adams, a former member of the Wall Street Journal *editorial board, is now writing a book on bank supervision under a grant from the Bradley Foundation.*

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theory of a certain part of Miami. "I was f---ing broke when I was a kid, and I got the s--- beat out of me by the cops," he recalls. "That's what made me think there's only one way to get around in life, that's politics and money." Drugs are taboo, but not jai alai or the lottery, he claims, in sound libertarian analysis, because the proceeds aren't taxed: "The only thing is since the Government don't make money, it's against the law." But today's criminals, he says, are tomorrow's social elite. "There ain't one f---ing fortune out here that hasn't been made, ah, illegitimately. The Kennedys, bootleggers, the other mother f---ers, gold thieves, ah, the Huns, whatever it might be."

As the tapes came out in court, they became Miami's own live soap opera, more entertaining even than the first season of "Miami Vice." They sound like *The Maltese Falcon* redone by the cast of Brian DePalma's *Scarface* from a script that leaves out Sam Spade. There's a Fat Man, a lobbyist and public relations hustler named Don Dugan, who weighed in at 350 pounds before his incarceration. There's a femme fatale named Roxanne Pandora Greene, police informant and San Pedro's girlfriend, who was a smash in her televised deposition, in abstractly streaked summer dress, blue-tinted sunglasses, and broad-brimmed straw hat. And there is a very special Wilmer, a well-connected lawyer named Ronald Book who becomes the fall guy for much more than San Pedro.

The tapes were partly the work of San Pedro's girlfriend Roxanne, a "political groupie" from a middle-class family who was once president of the Hialeah Young Republicans Club. Politics brought Roxanne and Alberto together. (She testified that they first made love after spending the afternoon putting up campaign posters for a local judge.) But she turned on him after he bugged her telephone and caught her talking to a friend with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. San Pedro confronted her with his tape of the conversation, she said, yelling at her and hitting the top of his desk with a rolled up Sesame Street poster. For revenge, she started talking to every lawman who would listen.

As informant OCBT-56, Roxanne joined a crowd of agents taping San Pedro's conversations. The investigation was in high gear until it collided with San Pedro's pet project, his appeal to the State Cabinet to pardon his 1971 conviction. San Pedro was obsessed with overcoming his past. He hired people to lift his police records so frequently that the records chief for the Hialeah P.D. finally attached a note to the file saying, "Don't steal any more copies because I have 15 more." From late 1985 on, San Pedro worried constantly about his influence in Tallahassee, the state capital.

When Democratic Governor Bob Graham (now junior United States senator) went into his bathroom to shave one December morning, he found a note on the mirror urging the pardon. The note had come to the Governor's wife, Adele, from a high school chum and former beauty queen who was dating one of San Pedro's associates, the son of an alleged mafioso. Graham denied coming under any influence, but his handling of the case was a model of ambiguity. At the pardon hearing, he deplored the "shadow" over San Pedro, "which hasn't after four or five years moved to the substance of some action." He called for agencies "with information that would warrant a denial to come forward publicly and specifically," and then he continued the case. Some police feel that this pressure pushed them to make premature arrests.

"Don't let Book give him the money," San Pedro told Dugan. "You give him the money. . . . Not that they're crooked, you know. Politicians are never crooked."

Some other fears also triggered the San Pedro bust, in early 1986. Police thought he was about to order the murder of a man who owed him money, and Sergeant Perry discovered that he'd been exposed as an undercover cop. But the bust, on sixty-four counts of public bribery, drug sales, and murder conspiracy, at least temporarily embarrassed Governor Graham, who had praised San Pedro's "impressive" community record. A host of local officials blustered out of the mess, claiming that San Pedro exaggerated his influence. (One School Board member who was honest or naive enough to admit accepting his unreported campaign contribution did plead guilty to breaking the campaign finance law.)

The prime political casualty, however, was former State Attorney General Robert Shevin, a large, sweaty, and brilliant Miami attorney, who had unwisely written San Pedro a letter of recommendation for a clemency hearing in 1979. Shevin was leading in the polls for Democratic nominee for governor when he suddenly pulled out of the 1986 primary. His role is still debated. "I feel terrible about what happened to Shevin," says Sergeant Perry. "He's one of the most honest men in the state." But there's another side to the story, and it casts a sharp light on Florida's vulnerable political structure.

Fund-raising prompted Shevin to praise San Pedro's "strong principles and religious beliefs." Shevin had received at least $2,000 of San Pedro's money in his 1978 campaign for governor. And there's little room to doubt that San Pedro had the same thing on his mind when he went to Shevin's law firm for help with his 1985 request for a pardon.

San Pedro hired a 43-year-old lawyer named Ronald Book, a six-footer with a trim black beard and mustache, who had just been made a name partner in the Miami firm of Sparber, Shevin, Shapo & Heilbronner. Book, who had been managing political campaigns since his teens, was previously Governor Graham's legal counsel. He was also one of Graham's chief fund raisers. Although Book's first job was the pardon, his other affairs soon became mired with San Pedro's.

Book was never charged, but his name jumps out of the tapes on one of San Pedro's bribery schemes. A shady company called Southern Combustion Technologies, another of Book's clients, wanted to build a hazardous waste disposal plant in the suburb of Opa Locka. To overcome the understandable local resistance, San Pedro dispatched his Fat Man gofer, Donald Dugan, with $4,000 for the town's vice-mayor. "Don't let Book give him the money," San Pedro told Dugan. "You give him the money. . . . Not that they're crooked, you know. Politicians are never crooked."

The vice-mayor, in fact, was wired for sound. The deal collapsed. Dugan was indicted for bribery, and San Pedro mused later about his bad luck. "The funny thing," the bug caught him saying, "it has nothing to do with me. Something that 'Shevin' wanted. We did him a favor, the Attorney General of Florida." Shevin states he had no personal dealings with San Pedro and that the use of his name referred generically to his law firm. But San Pedro seemed to expect a favor back. "So Bob Shevin better take this case on for free, for free, he better do it," San Pedro told Dugan.

In spite of the San Pedro setback, Shevin and Book are still important members of Florida's establishment, and we will meet them again. San Pedro himself is facing hard time, and a possible jury tampering probe, no matter that the press now soft-pedals his scandal. As he stews in jail, it's hard not to sympathize with his bitter thoughts on the elected officials who took his contributions. "The most corrupted mother f---ers and the most dirtiest lying sons of bitches I have ever known has been the politicians. . . . They'd f---ing steal everything if they could sell it. All right? The only thing is they don't get caught and they stick together and they don't give themselves up that easy."

Jose Antonio Fernandez

If San Pedro's crew could have populated *The Maltese Falcon*, Jose Antonio Fernandez could easily stand in for *Scarface* hero Tony Montana. A Cuban national who fled to the U.S. in 1962, Jose Antonio survived through low-paying odd jobs, including a stint as contract employee for the Central Intelligence Agency, until 1976. In that year he fell in with Jose Alvero-Cruz, the largest marijuana smuggler in Miami. Called the "King of the River" for his control of the Cuban fishermen who docked along the Miami River, Alvero-Cruz added Fernandez as a lookout and truck driver. Relatively good English and an engaging manner brought Jose Antonio the added duty of babysitting the Anglo distributors they supplied.

In mid-1976, with the feds bearing down, Alvero-Cruz took an extended vacation in Spain, the drug dealers' haven for rest and recreation. Fernandez moved into the vacuum as a broker, acting as a bridge between the Yankee-hating Colombians and the red-neck buyers. In the next four years, he moved about one million pounds of marijuana, a potential profit of $8 to $30 million. As with Tony Montana, his biggest problem was what to do with the money.

Alvero-Cruz had introduced Fernandez to a volatile young man named Ray Corona, whose father was an established banker in Havana and then Miami. The two dealers started putting deposits in a small institution called Totalbank, then the Coronas' employer. As major customers, they were invited to a clients' lunch at the bank's dining room. As they sat around the table, Fernandez recalled later at the Coronas' trials, "some gentleman from the bank asked what was my business." Fernandez had brought his lawyer to cover for any faux pas, and his mouthpiece answered, "Mr. Fernandez is an entrepreneur."

"It is the first time I heard that word," Fernandez said. "I said, 'Jesus, who knows what he called me.'" →

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After the lunch, Fernandez and Corona started talking about buying their own bank, and they soon began shopping in earnest. After one false start, *of later interest,* Ray Corona came up with the Sunshine State Bank. Miami financiers tell stories about people walking in off the street and offering to buy their bank. The purchase of Sunshine State wasn't much different. Fernandez recalls that Ray Corona and his Panamanian business agent flew up to his mid-Florida farm one day in mid-1978 literally hopping with excitement. They were closing on the bank, and they wanted $1.2 million to finish the deal. Fernandez says he went to his bedroom closet and pulled Samsonite suitcases full of cash out on top of his bed. They counted out the million in bundles of hundreds. Rather than give up his luggage, Fernandez went to the kitchen and emptied out a cardboard box of his infant son's peach juice.

But the most remarkable thing about the purchase was the lack of trouble with the state regulators. "I talked to Ray several times," Fernandez told the court. "He told me everything was going fine in Tallahassee. Not to worry about that. That part he got [under] control.

"Really we had a conversation, he got somebody there that was to make sure it happened. He was using some kind of attorney or something, somebody who has some kind of power in politics. He was very sure it would be approved."

These connections became even more important as the bank went steadily downhill. Ray Corona installed his father as chairman and himself as president, but the family banking tradition didn't sit comfortably on his stocky shoulders. A former Golden Gloves boxing champion, Ray looked more like a thug than a financier, and his behavior started to worry his silent partner. Said Fernandez, "People were telling me rumors he was being disorderly and doing strange things and driving Rolls Royces, using mink coats and making big fights at the Mutiny." The plush bar at the Mutiny Hotel in Coconut Grove used to be a big hangout for drug dealers until they were crowded out by tourists, and Ray provoked a dispute there with Fernandez's partner over one of its sparsely clad waitresses. Fernandez claims it took all of his diplomacy to keep Ray from getting killed. As much of Miami soon guessed, Ray had become a cocaine addict.

Ray's reputation troubled federal regulators, if not the state. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) audited Sunshine State along with all the other banks where it insured depositors' accounts, and its regional office examiners became increasingly worried and frustrated about the bank's condition. "They were so emotional about it that their voices would crack," recalls former FDIC Chairman Irvine Sprague. At almost every turn, the federal regulators ran into passive resistance from the State Comptroller, whose banking division had chartered the bank. The feds wanted to evict the Corona family from Sunshine State; the State Comptroller signed a Memorandum of Understanding removing Ray as president, but leaving his brothers on the board and allowing them to rehire him as a consultant.

The narcotics traffic flourishes not only because of demand, but because of tacit acceptance by elements of the political structure.

State examiners were more lenient than the FDIC in classifying the bank's bad loans. When the FDIC finally exerted full pressure to close the bank (which legally only the state could order), the Florida Comptroller strangely bungled the job. The State Comptroller's attorneys chose an unusual procedure which allowed Sunshine's lawyer to stay the closing. The Coronas managed to tie up the FDIC in a two-year lawsuit. Their extremely able lawyer, none other than the former State Attorney General Robert Shevin, performed the superhuman feat of keeping Sunshine State open even after Ray and Rafael Corona were indicted as part of a "vertically integrated" drug smuggling conspiracy.

The bank far outlasted Jose Antonio's empire, which was infiltrated by the Drug Enforcement Administration as early as 1980. As he began to lose loads more frequently, his Colombian suppliers grew restless and kidnapped him to enforce prompter payment. (Following standard practice, after his release they sent him a bill for the cost of the kidnapping, including the price of the guns.) With everyone on his tail, Fernandez managed to flee to Brazil, where Ray Corona called him frequently from a pay phone at the 7-Eleven across from the Sunshine State Bank. Fernandez actually seemed relieved when the DEA caught up with him. Drawing a 23-year sentence, he turned state's evidence on his partners and entered the witness protection program.

It took the government two trials to convict Ray and Rafael Corona, but Ray was ultimately sentenced to twenty years. Sunshine State was finally closed in the fall of 1986, after a last-ditch purchase offer from its largest borrower, the Cavanaugh Corporation, which had raised eyebrows through its speculations in Miami Beach art deco hotels and casino real estate in Atlantic City. Attorney Shevin confirms that he received more than a million-dollar fee for his Sunshine State work.

II. THE SYSTEM

No one wants to accuse a lawyer like Robert Shevin of criminal or even unethical behavior. He is a superb attorney and a leader of the Florida bar. But he is also part of a political system that has given power and protection to men like Alberto San Pedro and Jose Antonio Fernandez. The exploits of the drug lords make fascinating movies, but their success depends on something harder to dramatize. The massive flow of drug money which has corrupted Florida from top to bottom encountered a political culture quite happy to be corrupted. This culture, as well as geography and the bilingual bridge, may well be the reason that Miami remains the financial center of the drug trade even as the smuggling routes move west to Louisiana, Texas, and California.

Truly big-time drug networks like that run by Jose Antonio Fernandez require a financial infrastructure. Fernandez had to remit well over $100 million to his Colombian suppliers. This required an elaborate network of bank accounts and Panamanian shell corporations. He also had to handle his own profits and somehow account for his sudden burst of prosperity. His solution, to buy his own bank, should have been riskier than it was. Banks have regulators, who are supposed to scrutinize charter applications, monitor operations, and remove bad managers. In the case of the Sunshine State Bank, Florida clearly failed. It is not an isolated case.

The breakdown in financial regulation is part of a general political weakness. The state government operates under one of those post-Reconstruction Southern constitutions designed to make the governor as pliable as possible. Only a portion of the government, offices such as budget, report directly to the governor. Major departments like law enforcement and natural resources fall under control of a Cabinet composed of the seven elected state officers. State government sometimes looks and acts like a South American junta.

This diffused chain of command can lead to cases like the disgrace of Elton Gissendanner. Dr. Gissendanner, executive director of the state Department of Natural Resources, was charged last year with trying to shake down a major marijuana smuggler arrested by the Florida Marine Patrol, a branch of DNR which acts like a state Coast Guard. His partner in the alleged scheme was another accused smuggler, a close personal friend whom the DNR director had earlier tried to help beat a drug rap. (On his own case, Gissendanner made a plea bargain on a lesser charge, taking an 18-month sentence.) Naturally, no one on the seven-man junta is taking responsibility for the lax supervision of DNR.

But the Junta's weakness comes home to roost on the state's financial institutions. Florida is the only state in the nation that places every scrap of its financial regulation in the hands of elected (and intensely political) public officials. The supervisor for banks, thrifts, and securing brokers is the State Comptroller, a Brylcreemed and tormented Harvard graduate named Gerald Lewis, 54, under attack for years for spectacular lapses like the Sunshine State Bank. Insurance, and a grab-bag of related businesses like Health Maintenance Organizations are the province of State Treasurer/Insurance Commissioner Bill Gunter, also 54, a red-haired, round-faced self-proclaimed consumerist. Once called a "political nymphomaniac" by a friend, Gunter runs perennially for higher office and leads Democratic primary polls this year in the race for United States senator.

Gunter is the Baptist son of a dairy farmer from North Florida, and Lewis is a Jewish lawyer from Miami, but their collaboration lies at the heart of the Junta. Together they have a squeeze on the state's $30 billion financial services industry, and they milk it constantly for campaign money. If they ever felt embarrassed at taking money from companies they regulated, they could arrange for insurance companies to contribute to the State Comptroller and for banks to give to the Insurance Commissioner. "If you gave to Gunter, it was considered the same as a contribution to Lewis," said one of their former fund-raisers. As stalwarts of Democratic party finances and as entrenched Cabinet members, their influence extends beyond their obscure posts. It has survived the transition from Democratic Governor Graham, an occasional ally, to Republican Governor Bob Martinez, who often seems at the mercy of Tallahassee

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veterans. This alliance owes its coherence to a network of senior aides and fund-raisers like Ronald Book of San Pedro notoriety. A close-knit circle even for small-town Tallahassee, these young hustlers with titles like Deputy Comptroller and Deputy Insurance Commissioner lunch together, room together, swap jobs, and take in each other's political laundry.

Another institution helps prop up the Junta, and that is the political law firm. The aides who ride the merry-go-round of campaign worker, fund-raiser, and senior bureaucrat often wind up with lucrative jobs at a handful of firms well known for their access in Tallahassee. Sparber, Shevin is one, as is Greenberg, Traurig, Askew, Hoffman, Lipoff, Rosen & Quentel of Miami, which until recently featured former governor and presidential candidate Reubin Askew. Miami's Arky, Freed, Stearns, Watson & Greer did yeoman work for a series of notorious clients, until the suicide of its founder, Stephen W. Arky. In Orlando, Swann & Haddock has a special tie with the Insurance Department. These firms play on personal friendships and former staffers, but they also raise money. On a good night of fund-raising, one of these lawyers can generate over $100,000 in campaign contributions, a lot of it from clients with pending business before the regulators. Florida has a campaign limit of $3,000 from an individual, but like other national campaign reforms this law merely shifts influence to those law firms or banks that can line up a large number of four-digit contributors.

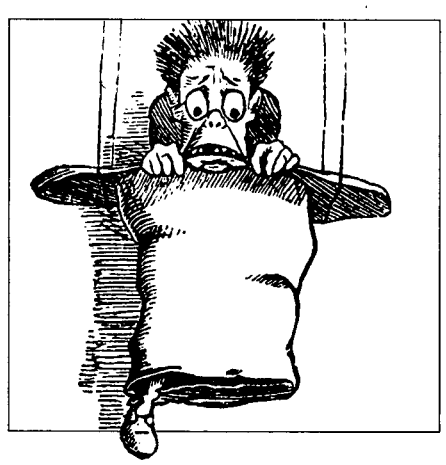
Some of these lawyer-allies have used their connections to build personal financial empires that in turn help hold together the political Junta. Insurance Commissioner Gunter's personal alter ego is Orlando attorney Richard Swann of Swann & Haddock. From his start as one of the earliest backers of both Gunter and Jimmy Carter, Swann has come to control both a bank and a group of insurance companies, and he has put influential legislators on their payroll. The Appropriations Committee chairman of the Florida House is a vice-chairman of Swann's American Pioneer Savings Bank, drawing a large salary.

The final loop is the widespread notion that these firms can get their clients preferred treatment. Even worse are the impressive string of stories that routine approvals have encountered mysterious delays, amid discreet hints that business should be diverted to more favored lawyers. At the Corona trial, veteran Miami banker Angus Harrison testified, "It seemed to me that if you used the certain law firm in Tallahassee, it may have been able to speed things up. Our people did not want to do that. We used our regular lawyers, and it took six years to get the charter."

The sad irony is that both Lewis and Gunter entered office in the late seventies as reformers, along with the urban progressives who broke the hold of the rural "porkchoppers" in the legislature. The incumbent Comptroller and Insurance Commissioner of the 1970s both ended their careers in the grand jury room. Florida's temptations are so severe that both Lewis and Gunter at times have seemed destined to end the same way. Four separate federal grand juries have taken testimony about their offices, in cases involving a bankrupt savings and loan, a fraudulent auto insurer, and charges of extortion within Lewis's staff.

In a way, Lewis and Gunter could be called victims of a popular culture that has grown excessively tolerant of sleazy dealings. In their 1986 campaign, the local press awoke from its slumber and detailed scandal after scandal. Whistleblowers stepped forward. The cozy deals among the law firms, the fund-raisers, and the crooked businessmen were laid on the public record. Lewis's former general counsel, S. Craig Kiser, campaigned against him with a call to take bank supervision out of electoral politics. Kiser received about $34,000 in campaign contributions and didn't make it through the Republican primary. Lewis and Gunter won handily in November after multi-million dollar campaigns.

The system has become so blatant that some insiders are dropping out in revulsion. This March, in the surprise of the year, former Governor Askew quit the Democratic U.S. Senate primary, complaining vehemently about the efforts necessary to raise campaign money. He's urging passage of a bill that would limit spending and fund-raising in U.S. Senate campaigns and would force disclosure of the fund-raisers who practice "bundling," raising and packaging a number of large donations from their clients or affiliates. Without naming names, he denounces the practice of regulators raising money from people they regulate. "It's a very bad system," he told me.



This March, in the surprise of the year, former Governor Askew quit the Democratic U.S. Senate primary, complaining vehemently about the efforts necessary to raise campaign money.

After Askew withdrew, his law partners, who had helped drum up about one million in donations, promptly accepted his resignation from Greenberg, Traurig. Askew won't comment on that.

Some insight into this murky affair comes from another Greenberg, Traurig partner who left the firm a few months earlier. Anthony J. O'Donnell, a Princeton Ph.D. specializing in land use and zoning cases, says he just got fed up with the system. "In order to be able to operate effectively, one had to be part of this campaign-contribution mechanism," he says. "I decided I couldn't participate in what amounted to a system of legalized bribery."

III. THE PENETRATION

Politicians weren't the only ones to benefit from the Junta's elegant, self-perpetuating system. Anyone with sufficient cash could buy into the inner circle, and the biggest contributors most likely had the most urgent reasons to make nice to the regulators. For the past decade, campaign finance reports for Gunter and Lewis have been studded with the names of notorious financial frauds. Heavy givers included the leaders of ESM Government Securities in Fort Lauderdale, a $300 million scam whose collapse set off the Ohio Bank Holiday in 1985. In 1982, Lewis received $1,000 from Jose Antonio Fernandez's lawyer (and later co-defendant) and another $1,500 from the Sunshine State Bank's largest borrower. Just months after these donations, the minimum that could be identified from the campaign reports, the Comptroller rescinded a disciplinary action against the bank.

Campaign contributions have given drug rings an open door to penetrate state government. Consider the case of Leonard L. Levenstein, one of Gerald Lewis's large contributors since his 1972 race for the Public Service Commission. By 1982, Levenstein was chairman of a bank that generated $5,000 for Lewis's campaign. In 1983, it emerged that Levenstein had another substantial business, setting up dummy corporations for marijuana smugglers. He and two law partners were arrested on drug conspiracy charges dating to 1975. Comptroller Lewis refused to oust Levenstein from his bank post until the press began to criticize the delay. Lewis also admitted knowing about the investigation for two years.

Cases like Levenstein and the Sunshine State Bank suggest strongly that Florida has become the widely acknowledged capital of money laundering because of lax state financial regulation. There is almost an apostolic succession of drug banks. As soon as one is closed down, another pops up to take its place, with little problem in obtaining a charter or change-in-control approval. Sunshine State itself was the successor to the granddaddy of all the Miami drug and banking scandals, the WFC Corporation of Guillermo Hernandez-Cartaya which collapsed in 1977. When Ray Corona and Jose Antonio Fernandez were looking for a bank to buy in 1977, their first candidate was Hernandez-Cartaya's Hialeah-based National Bank of South Florida.

The NBSF was accused of acting as a money-laundering arm for the WFC, whose activities fill six volumes and 20,000 pages of FBI files. (The head cashier was actually tried for violating currency-reporting rules, but a U.S. Magistrate acquitted him after telling prosecutors they should have indicted the bank itself.) In a cause celebre which made "60 Minutes," investigators suspected Hernandez-Cartaya, a silver-haired veteran of banking in Havana, New York, and Atlanta, of handling drug money for Fidel Castro. Those charges, and a more substantial fraud case, never reached trial,[1] but enough emerged to make Hernandez-Cartaya the biggest skeleton in quite a few closets.

In his heyday, the Cuban-American banker maintained friendships with Robert Shevin, then State Attorney-

[1]A fresh witness has recently emerged, however, who recalls seeing Hernandez-Cartaya in Havana in late 1976, dining with General Jose Abrantes, the senior intelligence officer in charge of United States contacts. The witness is Jose Luis Llovio-Menendez, who, as former Chief Adviser to the Minister of Finance, is the highest-level Cuban Government official to seek asylum in the U.S. Llovio-Menendez also identifies Hernandez-Cartaya's bodyguard as a Cuban agent known in Havana as Samuel.

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General, and Insurance Commissioner Gunter. He and his employees gave heavily to their campaigns.

Gunter was drawn into Hernandez-Cartaya's affairs after the collapse of the Hialeah bank. Cartaya tried to set up an insurance company, the American Atlantic Assurance Co., to take its place. Even though his nationally chartered bank had been shut down firmly by the federal Comptroller of the Currency (not to be confused with the State Comptroller), the Insurance Commissioner allowed Cartaya's group to submit its charter application three times. At one point Gunter's friend Richard Swann helped Hernandez-Cartaya search for endorsements. Two Metro-Dade police detectives on the WFC case heard that the charter was about to go through. They flew to Tallahassee to warn Gunter that an insurance company was an even better conduit than a bank for money laundering. But former Insurance Department employees say the charter was finally rejected in December 1977, just as the *New York Times* did an exposé on WFC. "Pending investigations concerning your company's operations will have to be settled completely in your favor," Gunter wrote Cartaya. "Once these areas of concern have been resolved, please notify me."

For years, Gunter's senior staff juggled this application file like a hot potato. It is certain from other sources that its contents would embarrass not only Gunter but some of the most powerful figures in Miami politics. But when this writer asked to see it this May, Gunter's spokeswoman discovered that it had been included with a batch of rejected applications from 1982 to 1984 that had been discarded "as a routine measure to save space." The file was finally destroyed on May 17 of this year, two days before Gunter announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate.

Hernandez-Cartaya left the scene, eventually serving several years in federal prison for misapplying funds from a Texas thrift. (He had purchased the thrift, the Jefferson Savings and Loan of McAllen, from Lloyd Bentsen, Sr., an economic power in South Texas and the father of the United States senator and Michael Dukakis's running mate. For a while Bentsen Sr. and the senator's brother, Donald Bentsen, served as directors with Hernandez-Cartaya. Donald Bentsen says Hernandez-Cartaya was a respected businessman at the time of the sale.) But several of Hernandez-Cartaya's associates continued to deal successfully with the Insurance Department.

Hernandez-Cartaya also left behind some friends with a need for "flexible" banking. Jose Alvero-Cruz, the marijuana smuggler and mentor of Jose Antonio Hernandez, had a half interest in the bid to buy Hernandez-Cartaya's National Bank of South Florida. Alvero-Cruz was an old acquaintance of Hernandez-Cartaya as well as much of the anti-Castro terrorist network through the Brigada 2506, the organization of Bay of Pigs veterans.

The "Great Corrupter" Alberto San Pedro, of all people, gives a hint of continuity from Hernandez-Cartaya's mid-seventies operation through two Hialeah banks that failed early this year. One of his tapes catches a disjointed reference to "all of the grass money, Fidel Castro was involved, on Ninth Street" at the NBSF. "And then they moved that, the operations," he continues.

"I got a connection for the Congressman," San Pedro says. "So my friend tells me, 'Hey Al, you know, if you (inaudible) do me a favor, why don't you try and stay away from these people, 'cause between you and me, they feel that that bank is being used for "something," the Global Bank of Hialeah.' "

The Global Bank, a one-story building near the Miami River where San Pedro had several accounts, had been notorious for years. In one celebrated incident, its chairman, Hialeah City Councilman Silvio Cardoso, had a fistfight with the bank president in the middle of the lobby, leaving blood on the floor. Police heard a story that the fight involved a $200,000 deposit San Pedro had made earlier that day, but both bank officers deny it.

San Pedro, a friend of Cardoso from junior high school, did help him look into reports that the FBI was investigating Global. San Pedro paid Sergeant Perry, the PBA president, $2,000 to obtain the FBI files on Cardoso. The FBI gave Perry a dummy file for his undercover operation. Perry showed the file to Cardoso and San Pedro over drinks at a Holiday Inn. When Perry encouraged Cardoso to think he could identify the source of the information, his body bug picked up this charming exchange:

Cardoso: That would be nice.
San Pedro: That would be great.
Perry: If you promise not to whack him.
San Pedro: F--- you.

So the only surprise when the FDIC shut down Global this February was that it had taken so long.

Banking practice in Hialeah had grown so bad that the Feds had to close down another bank, the Trust Bank, on their way to Global. Since it opened in 1984, Trust Bank had steadily lost money. After its first year, the bank was in such bad shape that examiners from the Federal Reserve Bank insisted on imposing a Memorandum of Understanding on its officers in July 1985. Just a month before he helped negotiate this ineffective discipline, Comptroller Lewis had accepted $1,000 campaign contributions from the Trust Bank chairman and several of its directors. (One of the contributors, whose check bounced, was another former Hialeah councilman, who was indicted this March on federal charges of fraudulently obtaining loans at both Trust and Global.) In 1987, Federal Reserve examiners were so shocked by Trust Bank's condition that they started proceedings to remove its chairman, and the State Comptroller followed suit. At this point, Trust Bank turned, no less, to Robert Shevin to repeat the magic of his Sunshine State performance. Shevin did buy some time, a few months perhaps, but the bank was so far gone, and the State Comptroller was so burned by the Sunshine State experience, that Trust Bank closed in January.

The federal examination of Trust Bank led directly to Global, which had been making bad loans to some of the same people. (One of the deals, it turned out, involved the casino speculators who had sunk their hooks into Sunshine State.) The state shut down Global two weeks after it closed Trust. Then, strangely, the regulators sold Global to five-year-old Ocean Bank, a Venezuelan-owned Miami bank still struggling to consolidate its own rapid growth.

If it weren't for the heat, one would call these banks the tip of the iceberg. The National Bank of South Florida, Sunshine State Bank, Trust Bank, Global Bank have met their fate, but no one knows just what is going on among Miami's other fast-growing banks and self-made financial millionaires. Sunshine, Global, and the like were small operations, easily watched. Perhaps more typical is the Capital Bank, a true Miami success story. Founded in the early seventies by Cuban refugee Abel Holtz, Capital is now Miami's sixth largest bank with $800 million in assets. Its holding company also owns banks in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. It recruited former Governor Askew and former U.S. Senator Richard Stone as directors. (Askew left the board this March.)

Along the way, Capital Bank was caught laundering millions of dollars for a Colombian drug ring. In a 1981 confiscation hearing, a federal judge stated that when Abel Holtz discovered the operation, he demanded an increase in the bank's fee. Holtz, the judge chided, "knew or reasonably should have known that the cash . . . was drug tainted." But Holtz kept his political contacts. He remained on the Investment Advisory Council to the State Board of Administration, an entity consisting of the Governor, Comptroller Lewis, and Insurance Commissioner Gunter that governed the state's nine billion dollar pension fund. In 1987, some Capital Bank borrowers complained to federal agents that their loan officers had been forcing them to make campaign contributions to Gunter and Lewis.

IV. "IT NEVER ENDS"

Whenever I discuss Miami intrigues with a favorite source, a former federal prosecutor, we wind up saying, "It never ends." One financial scandal segues into another, surrounded by tantalizing continuities and hints of hidden structures. Drug dealers flourish and get busted, or murdered, but the morality play never seems to extend to the financial and political infrastructure. Ron Book, San Pedro's ill-fated lawyer, seemed to have a comeuppance of sorts two years ago when Insurance Department investigators arrested him at his law office and led him out handcuffed in front of television cameras. But the charge was almost ludicrous. When his Porsche was stolen from the Miami Airport, he had filed a claim listing its value as $53,000 instead of the $44,000 he paid for it. Cynics noted that Insurance Commissioner Gunter had been drawing a lot of bad press for his cozy relations with the political law firms and that the San Pedro tapes made Book an easy scapegoat. Most of the case was dismissed on technicalities, and Book was last seen chatting amiably with Jeb Bush at Tallahassee's annual Republican Legislators' Appreciation Dinner. The Sparber, Shevin law firm broke up earlier this year, possibly over the tensions involving Book and Shevin, but no one is talking. If Gunter loses his Senate race, he keeps the option of returning to the Insurance Department. Comptroller Lewis seems entrenched. And even if they left office, nothing guarantees that their successors wouldn't yield to the same pressures.

These politicians, bankers, and lawyers are perfectly happy to hang up red plastic ribbons with the slogan, "Say No to Drugs." But watch them run for cover if the slogan reads, "Say No to Drug Money." When they turn a blind eye to the source of their campaign funds, or their fees, they cross the line into the drug world as surely as the off-loaders, mules, and money-changing smurfs. And the rhetoric of the Drug War becomes a hypocritical cant that even the dealers despise. □

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AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS

SCABROUS *SPY*

by Philip Barry

For many years one of the advantages of life in the United States over life in Britain was the absence of an American equivalent to Britain's politically minded satirical magazine, *Private Eye*. In October 1987 all that changed. *Spy* magazine started publication, immediately becoming another of the things wrong with New York. Like subway graffiti, *Spy* was illegible, destructive, ubiquitous, and initially praised by people of confused or no criteria.

"The Manhattan-based magazine is quite simply the funniest publication published on these shores," wrote *USA Today*'s magazine critic Deirdre Donahue, a bit disloyal to her own publication. "Clever, witty, heartless—the adjectives keep burbling up."

"Annoying, Appalling . . . Hilarious," burbled *Time*. "*Spy* has honed its unique editorial combination of good humor and bad manners into an upscale switchblade that has nearly doubled circulation!"

"What is *Spy*?" the magazine's own promotional literature asks. "*Spy* is a smart, stylish, satirical magazine that chronicles life in urban America. *Spy* offers witty revelations and unpredictable insights about the people and institutions that make metropolitan life special. The sophisticated, sharp and irreverent articles appeal to a bright, young, affluent audience."

Spy's bright, young, affluent readers and stupid, badly dressed, physically unattractive readers alike thrill to the magazine's vicious assaults on "the overdog, the fattened grandees that make up New York life." A regular column of abusive gossip is devoted to the *New York Times*'s occasionally anti-Communist former executive editor Abe Rosenthal, his wife, and such colleagues as former *Times Magazine* editor Ed Klein.

Spy—whose founding editors, Kurt Andersen, 33, and E. Graydon Carter, 38, previously worked at Time Inc.—is written in a variation of *Time*-style that replaces *Time*'s perky-adjective-before-the-noun with a slander, or a slander and a perky adjective, or an entire perkily slanderous clause. In Spystyle Mrs. Abe Rosenthal is always "bosomy dirty book writer Shirley Lord," and her husband, now a columnist for the *Times*, is always "Abe 'I'm writing as bad as I can' Rosenthal."

Comments one *Spy* editor in a moment of reflection and humility: "It's irreverent and light and biting, but there is a moral background, a purpose. We champion the underdog and bite the ankle of the overdog."

"*Spy* doesn't take anything too seriously, not even itself," writes *New York* magazine's media critic. "Nor has the magazine any political or social agenda."

According to the *Washington Post*, "*Spy* prides itself on being an equal-opportunity destroyer." In a military metaphor, editor Andersen says the magazine practices "non-partisanship about where the artillery is pointed."

The impartial tone is unmistakable. In *Spy*'s June lead-in Andersen's targets include George Bush (longest entry), Ed Meese, Richard Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, President Reagan (for believing "his own dreamy lies about the workability of a high-tech nuclear missile defense system"), Senate Majority Leader Byrd (for urging caution in making treaties with the Soviets he is called "especially dumb" and remembered as a "former Klan member"), and the "really shameless" ABC Television (for hiring "the right-wing, breast-enlarged, document-shredding former secretary Fawn Hall"). Those who get it elsewhere in the issue include George Bush (the "vision thing" chestnut), Ursula Meese, Lynn Nofziger, President Reagan, Middle America ("a vast cultural Gobi populated by armed neo-Nazi lunatics"), G.I. Joe ("War Criminal"), and Richard Nixon ("All-purpose crook and figure of evil").

For the "major piece of journalism" *Spy* now promises "in every single issue, a serious piece," the magazine chose an unusually obscure fattened grandee—"a young man," it admits, "you've probably never heard of." (So as not to injure this young man further by repeating his real name in connection with this major but rather unkind piece of journalism, a fictitious name—"Bruce Handy"—will be used.)

Though the article is signed and ostensibly written by a *Spy* staff writer, Spywatchers see editor Andersen's hand in its intimate, personal knowledge of the subculture of shameless opportunism and ruthless social climbing at Harvard College.

Awkward Moments in Serious Journalism

The article opens with a list of some of the notable guests at Handy's wedding, from various liberals such as *Times* columnist Anthony Lewis to—in virtuoso Spystyle—"right-wing crank Norman Podhoretz" and "not-yet-indicted State Department liar Elliott Abrams," and asks querulously, "How did one wedding manage to attract representatives from the entire spectrum of mainstream American political thought?" There's a simple and quite obvious answer to this question, but then there would have been no major piece of journalism.

Handy is the editorial page editor of—in Spystyle—"Rupert Murdoch's blitheringly right-wing, cheesecake-filled *New York Post*"—and some of the guests were friends from his dozen years in political journalism and politics. What the serious journalists of *Spy* magazine bury is the other half of the Handy wedding—his wife, a liberal journalist who formerly helped edit the *New York Times* op-ed page where she had become friendly with many of the celebrity guests whose presence at the Handy wedding attracted the very unfriendly attention of *Spy* magazine. For *Spy*, truth is not a defense where "a particularly hardline neoconservative" is concerned.

Despite having attended the Time Inc. Serious Journalism School, the Spyjournalists have some trouble with the rudiments of reporting. In 400 column-inches of searing quote-filled expose they were unable to come up with more than one three-line quote openly uncomplimentary to Handy. Instead this major Spypiece is made up almost entirely of anonymous quotes—which is not to say it was entirely made up. The Spypeople went to Harvard with Handy and they might *conceivably* have just interviewed themselves for the piece. Perhaps they were only willing to talk to themselves on a non-attribution basis.

Some of the sources the Spyeditors cite: a Harvard classmate, a college classmate, another Harvard friend, a

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family observer, a Harvard friend, one friend, a friend, a friend, a friend, a classmate, one aficionado, a classmate, a Handy-watcher, a friend, one friend, one Handy-watcher, a friend, another friend, one source, one such pal, friends, a once-impressionable freshman, none of the friends interviewed for this piece, a college acquaintance, a friend, a knowledgeable friend, a friend, a friend, a friend, another friend, a puzzled former associate, a longtime friend, one New York writer, a friend.

In short, at least two people. The research job was onerous but, as the Spyeditors had told Naushad Mehta and Jay Cocks of *Time* magazine, "we decided to make the magazine all fact." Continued *Time*: "Fact checkers (two full-time, three part-time) make sure a story's aim stays true. . . . There have been no libel actions to date [November 2, 1987]." Even while Spyediting, Spyeditor Andersen continues as a Contributing TimeWriter. "Happily acknowledging 'a certain amount of scabrousness,' Andersen," according to *Time*, "thought 'it would be fun to have a forum that could be your sandbox.' "

The Spyeditors, who wanted an editorial voice "engaged in real life," faced a problem. A ten-page slam of a "right-wing editorialist" had been slated but the Spyjournalists had come back with only a few not-so-damning facts: that Handy was liked and considered "brilliant" by those who knew him best, including some well-known people; that he had successfully beaten a drug problem more serious than Kitty Dukakis's; that in college he sometimes cut himself while shaving (his shirt collars, *Spy* reports, "were habitually flecked with blood from shaving nicks—this last detail courtesy of a Handy-watcher who confesses to have been itching all these years to feed it to the press"); and, perhaps most damningly from *Spy*'s view, that his articles were "logical."

As generations of clever undergraduates have done at exam time when unacquainted with course material, the Spyeditors leap to an audacious theory which renders facts superfluous or stands them on their head: in this case that Handy's success and good reputation are just *proof* of his cynical cultivation of "connections," with those hard-to-refute anonymous sources calling him very nasty names: "a weird, sleazy guy," "a genetically groomed mix of Uriah Heep, young Dick Nixon, LBJ and Sammy Glick," "the Father Coughlin of the eighties," and "in with a lot of schmucks [neoconservatives]."

The "certain amount" of scabrousness Spyeditor Andersen happily acknowledges turns out to be *lots* of scabrousness. He is one *wild and scabrous* guy.

Homosexuality has been a special interest of *Spy* magazine and a favorite Spysmear of prominent conservatives. Spyeditor Andersen's table talk is filled with speculation about the hitherto unknown homosexuality of various famous capitalists and right-wingers. If these Spycharges derive from the intimate personal experience of Spystaffers, they should come out with it openly, in a manly way. The *Spy* queersmear is also directed toward hackneyed targets—male ballet dancers, etc. A typical coy implied-Spysmear: "heterosexual New York City Ballet master and dancer turned walker, the heterosexual Graydon C." *(name changed so as not to further Spysmear).*

"The community that wears suspenders," Spypublisher Tom Phillips, Jr. says cryptically, "is very important to us."

Behind the boyish giggles, however, *Spy*'s attitude toward homosexuality reflects a deep ambivalence. *Spy* deplored too-logical editor Handy's articles opposing enactment of a New York City homosexual rights law as "gay-bashing" and "poorly-reasoned homophobia." Personal experience has embittered Spypeople to sex-preference based prejudice. One of the rich, older men who befriended Andersen at Harvard, and who would later help him financially with his exciting publishing project, was coldly turned down when he sought to buy an expensive Park Avenue co-op apartment for which he was financially qualified. "Someone told the board that I liked little boys," he explained.

Although, like Cole Porter, married, Spyeditor Andersen now spends most of his day with older, dandyish co-editor Carter. "It's truly like a marriage," says Carter. "And like any good marriage, our partnership is based on sympathy and respect. We've never had an argument."

"The community that wears suspenders," Spypublisher Tom Phillips, Jr. says cryptically, "is very important to us." Until recently the three worked as male models (Barney's men's clothing was a client), but with Andersen's emerging neck-wattle there are fewer bookings now. Still, oddly, the urge to finger-point and name-call remains. Some Andersen-watchers say it is reminiscent of the case of the late Roy Cohn, but there is no evidence of that.

Yet it is a long-standing pattern. Some years ago, in his "list" book, *The Real Thing*, Andersen's compulsive name-calling led him to identify the Sesame Street muppets "Bert" and "Ernie" as the "real thing" in homosexuals. This was news to their wives. How did Andersen know? Perhaps he was acquainted with the popular television hosts from the sordid West Village bar scene. Or maybe he just made it up.

One Spyanomaly is how a self-proclaimed "wicked" and "scabrous" monthly should earn the universal gush of America's normally hard-to-please press corps, including not only *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas* magazine, but even *USA Today*'s difficult Deirdre Donahue. If *Spy* is so "Annoying, Appalling" (*Time*), why aren't more people (especially those important media people) Annoyed, Appalled?

The reason is that *Spy* has been terribly fortunate in its iconoclasm. *Spy*'s iconoclasm is the same as everyone else's iconoclasm. *Spy*'s "irreverence" is *tout le monde*'s irreverence. *Spy* is "unpredictable" the same way Sam Donaldson, Nina Totenberg, Richard Threlkeld, Mary McGrory, Daniel Schorr, Victor Navasky, Sidney Blumenthal, Alexander Cockburn, Leslie Cockburn, Vladimir Posner, and the late Claud Cockburn are unpredictable. The daring slams at Ed Meese, George Bush, Richard Nixon, *nouveau riche* developers' wives, President Reagan, *nouveau riche* developers, Norman Podhoretz, Oliver North, Elliott Abrams, and obscure right-wing editorialists just might not cost the Spyeditors important friends at the *Washington Post* "Style" section. These are not exactly *their* icons. So go ahead with the vicious, highly-personal ten-page hatchet jobs on obscure too-logical neoconservatives—you wild and wicked and scabrous guys, you!

But what of the heartbreak of scabrousness? When the "meanness" issue is raised, the Spyeditors respond defensively, sometimes petulantly. "Anyone we pick on is bigger than us," Carter replies. Andersen justifies his vicious, highly-personal monthly assault on former top Timesman Abe Rosenthal citing his alleged "years of capricious pain infliction . . . far greater than anything to which the man has been subjected in this space."

The constant vilification of Rosenthal actually originated not with *Spy* but in the late seventies with the *Village Voice*'s notorious "Press Clips" column of crypto-Stalinist Andersen role-model Alexander Cockburn. One of the sparse comic conceits of Nixon Era leftist publications was to call pretty much everyone on the other side "war criminal" and other funny stuff. Cockburn and now *Spy* have kept the Vishinskyesque hilarity rolling. What made Abe Rosenthal the constant target of their abuse was not any office temper tantrum but his tampering with the *Times*'s happy progressive unanimity by occasionally publishing, and even hiring, people with an ordinate fear of Communism. The *Times Magazine*'s occasional publication of articles by these fearful people—people who simply refused to understand the intense, claustrophobic feelings that occasionally oblige Soviet Bloc countries to move large numbers of troops into other countries—marked *Times Magazine* editor Ed Klein for constant vilification by Cockburn-Andersen. Now that the *Times*, under new executive editor Max Frankel, is moving back to relentless progressive self-parody, the Spyeditors are pleased, respectful. "As the monsters are tucked away in the closet it becomes a better-run place, and probably less fun to write about," is how one puts it.

Beyond the politics of what the Spyeditors disapprove—"there's a lot more to the [*New York*] *Post*'s political sensibility than just poorly reasoned homophobia—there's also hard-line anticommunism and knee-jerk mistrust of arms control and suspicion of civil rights"—are their affirmative beliefs—the earnest, sincere, deeply-held, profoundly-progressive, even loving views they have found harder to share with their readers in any open way. Fearless bully on the outside, the Spyjournalist is a quivering Samantha Smith on the inside—worried about Arms Control, World Peace, the ozone layer, and homophobic white men dressed in sheets and suspicious of civil rights.

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Malice used to be something reserved almost entirely to private life—the exchange of such stories and information was part of any gathering of family or friends, the impetus for countless local telephone calls that helped people keep in touch. Malice was for free, open to anyone, with some gifted amateurs who knew just how much and what sort of malice was right for the audience (rarely more than six or seven people) and occasion. *Spy* magazine has changed all that. Now it is malice for pay, slander for dollars. Blurt out "right-wing, breast-enlarged, document-shredding former secretary Fawn Hall" and you have made $4 at the base 40¢ per-word rate *Spy* pays its free-lancers. Think up a sentence—"Abe [Rosenthal] is now bustling along in his fancy new career as a professional dinner guest—albeit an unengaging one, according to those who have had the misfortune of being placed next to him"—and you have made over $12. A single particularly wordy libel can earn the writer over a hundred bucks, and in a major Spypiece there could be scores of them.

Spy's crass mass-marketing of malice has had the predictable consequences—overproduction, repetition, bad-taste, the division of the malice-universe into a small clique of malice-producers and a large mass of malice-consumers, such as Elizabeth Comen of Flatbush, Brooklyn, who each month plunks down $2.50 for *Spy*'s 120 pages of malice and bad-liquor ads—enough to have lasted a lifetime if passed on the old, civil way, in small doses by friends and co-workers.

The old theatrical saw that satire is what closes on Saturday night turns out to have been just wishful thinking in *Spy*'s case. Massive advertising for foul-smelling J&B Scotch and other panicky out-of-fashion liquor brands and a growing malicious-readership base (mean household income is $87,500) seem destined to make *Spy* a permanent aspect of the decline of life in America. □

SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

IA 655 ≠ KAL 007

by James Oberg

In human terms, the equivalence of the Iranian Airlines Flight 655 and Korean Airlines Flight 007 is clearcut. In both cases, almost three hundred people died needlessly and horribly. But in practical terms, more careful comparisons and contrasts must be made. Are the Soviets justified in feeling a bit smug as they recollect the American furor over their actions five years ago?

The short answer is that the cases really are fundamentally different. Both did involve the use of deadly force against a poorly defined target. But the Persian Gulf incident tends toward the Carl Rowan mode of gunfire: while standing in front of your own home and family, shoot at a figure approaching you in the dark. The Korean airliner fell victim to the pre-dawn lost-meter-reader mode of gunfire: shoot at a shadowy figure slipping over your back fence on his way out of your yard. Even the liberal court of Washington, D.C., could find no fault with Rowan's action; even the most trigger-happy Texas circuit judge would balk at tolerating somebody assaulting a receding figure that threatened no physical harm.

The IA-655 tragedy occurred over a war zone, in fact a battle zone, where combat operations were in progress and where hostile air feints and dodges had been occurring. American military forces had been attacked, and American lives had been lost, within the very recent past. On the other hand, KAL-007 was destroyed over a region of the world which had been at peace for almost forty years.

Moreover, the flight paths during the attacks were absolutely opposite in nature. IA-655 was inbound on a course which coincidentally would take it over the American warships. KAL-007 was outbound, having completed a crossing of the narrow waist of Sakhalin Island. Indeed, it was within a few seconds flying time of international waters (if it wasn't over them already) when it was destroyed. American intent was to defend, to prevent plausibly feared physical harm; the Soviet intent was to punish, to destroy a transgressor which had already made its intrusion and was about to "escape." No Soviet forces were in the remotest way threatened when the Korean airliner was attacked.

In terms of warning given, the two cases are again diametrically opposite. Soviet ex post facto claims of radio warnings are scarcely credible, since nobody else in the air (or in space) heard those alleged calls and since similar Soviet claims concerning previous border incidents were demonstrably phony. The American radio warnings are irrefutable, whether the Iranians chose to respond or not. The Soviets ignored the KAL radio transponder which would have established innocence; the Americans agonized over the clearly military-related Iranian airliner signal.

Following the KAL-007 attack, it was Soviet government reaction which received widespread denunciation. Even after the victims were dead, the Soviets could have significantly limited their public relations damage. Instead, for days Moscow issued denials, evasions, and half-truths, and then began a campaign to shift the blame. Accusations of spying or of deliberate provocation comprised—and still comprise—the official Soviet version.

Admission by the Soviets of their misidentification would have allowed mutual grief and deflected most of the world's ire. But the inflexible Soviet pose of self-righteousness and aggrieved innocence has been generally interpreted as the hypocrisy it really is.

The American reaction, by contrast, has been rapid and remarkably candid. News media and congressional briefings and press conferences

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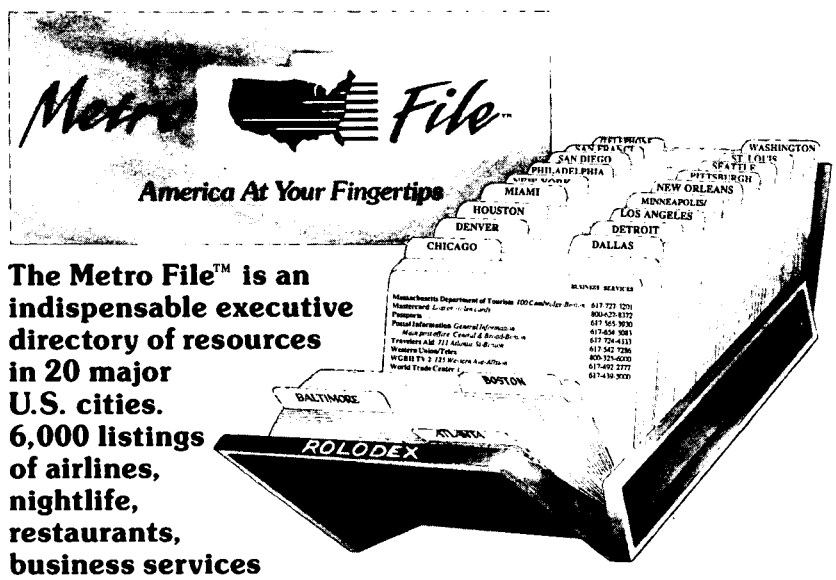

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have been frequent and detailed. Evil misperceptions have been corrected, not rigidly maintained. No evil intent has been ascribed to the hapless Iranian flight crew. The diplomatic fallout of the KAL tragedy included the collapse of European objections to the Pershing deployments, and the subsequent success of the reciprocal INF accords on SS-20s. The sacrifice thus may have contributed to reducing East-West tensions. It can be hoped that the shock of this new human catastrophe might advance peace in the Persian Gulf, but the half-million lives already thrown away in the insane conflict between Iran and Iraq have been unable to motivate the leaders, and this event is being used by Iran to heat up the war, not cool it off.

The *Vincennes* tragedy is unprecedented in the history of American military actions, but KAL-007 showed standard Soviet behavior. The Soviets in the past had systematically frustrated attempts to understand the causes of aviation catastrophes along their borders, particularly the 1978 Kola Peninsula incident and the 1981 destruction of the strayed Argentine cargo airliner over Azerbaijan.

These differences are clearcut. A dispassionate analysis refutes the widely expressed sentiment of many, that they cannot see any differences in the two tragedies. Such an assertion is a classic logical fallacy—"argument based on imaginative incapacity." To perceive the incidents as equivalent reflects wish, not wisdom. □

THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA

THE ELECTION DOLLAR

by Irwin M. Stelzer

Politics and economics are destined to meet, and clash, in world money markets for the next several months. This conflict arises from the fact that Treasury Secretary James Baker would like to provide George Bush with a stable or rising dollar into November, despite the fact that underlying economic forces dictate a further decline in our currency.

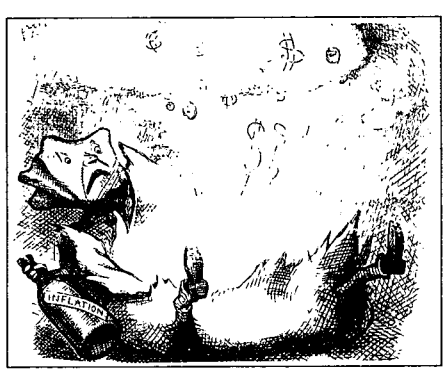
A strong dollar, in the Baker-Bush view, accomplishes several political objectives. First, it keeps down the cost of foreign goods, thereby reducing inflationary pressures. With unemployment at a fourteen-year low, the drought likely to drive food prices up, and many industries producing at close to capacity, Bush's men fear that inflation might accelerate just as the voters go to the polls. So lower-cost foreign goods are seen as an important offset.

Second, a strong dollar reduces the pressure on the Federal Reserve Board to raise interest rates, either as an anti-inflation measure or to prevent a run on the dollar. Since the rise in interest rates immediately preceding the October 19 stock market collapse is widely seen as a main cause of that collapse, Baker would like to avoid a sharp interest-rate boost between now and November. A strong dollar strengthens his hand.

Third, a strong dollar helps boost stock and bond prices. By reducing the fear of inflation and of interest rate increases, a strong dollar encourages investors to buy equities. In the case of foreign investors, the encouragement is double-barreled: yields on stocks look more attractive, relative to bonds when interest rates are kept down, and the danger of losses due to a fall in the dollar are reduced. (It does a Japanese investor little good to see a stock rise from $10 to $12 per share if, at the same time, the dollar falls from 135 yen to 100 yen. For, in that case, the Japanese will have paid 1,350 yen for the $10 stock, and received 1,200 yen for the $12 stock.)

Finally, a strong dollar will, in the short-run—and that is all that concerns Bushmen at the moment—make America's trade figures look better. With exports worth more yen, marks, and pounds, and imports costing fewer dollars, the reported trade deficit will be lower than it would be were the dollar to weaken.

This explains the United States' recent unwillingness to intervene to hold down the dollar, despite pressure to do so from its trading partners. The Germans, who spent a good part of the past year complaining that the falling dollar was wrecking their export industries—this proved not to be the case—now accuse America of letting the dollar rise so as to export inflation. As they see it, the rising dollar will make oil and other dollar-denominated commodities more expensive, and also raise the prices of manufactured goods imported from America, producing the inflation that Germans so dread. Thus the Bundesbank—aided by central banks in Britain, Italy, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Spain, and Austria—has been selling dollars on the open market, in an effort to check its rise.



Not so the Japanese. While that country's exporters clearly benefit from a rising dollar—Japanese goods would become cheaper in America, and made-in-the-U.S. products dearer in Japan—the Japanese fear that a worsening of the U.S. trade deficit will work to their long-term disadvantage by fueling protectionist sentiment in America. They also fear that a resurgence of Japanese exports, combined with booming production for home consumption, will strain their economy sufficiently to touch off an inflationary explosion. Finally, they want to do what they can to help Baker to help Bush: they know that Michael Dukakis will, if elected, be less likely to resist protectionist union leaders than Bush.

All of this political maneuvering is, of course, not particularly relevant to the long-term performance of the dollar. That performance will depend on the relationship between the outflow of dollars from America to pay for imported goods and to pay interest and dividends to foreigners who hold American assets, and the reverse flow of foreign monies coming here. If we keep sending out more dollars, we'll have to lower their price to get foreigners to take them. (An economist must add the obligatory "other things being equal.")

Since economics is an inexact science at best, forecasting an art, and exchange rate forecasting demonstrably hazardous to one's financial health, it is to be expected that opinions as to the further course of the dollar vary widely.

One school feels that the dollar will at least remain at its present level. Its members point out that America's trade deficit of $47 billion in the first four months of this year was $18 billion below the same period last year, primarily due to a boom in exports. "Exports have been growing at a 20 percent to 30 percent rate in a world in which total trade growth is only growing at a 5 percent rate," points out C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Institute for International Economics. "There has been a tremendous recouping of market share by American manufacturers."

And the prospect for further export growth—although perhaps not at recent rates—seems good. For one thing, American labor costs per unit of output are now very competitive. Our wages have risen very little in recent years, while productivity has soared (average annual productivity growth in 1983-1987 was triple the rate of the 1970s).

This improvement in our comparative cost situation has coincided with an improvement in the quality of American manufactures. While "quality"—which includes product reliability, durability, servicing and delivery time—is difficult to measure precisely, a recent study by the Federal Reserve

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Bank of New York developed sufficient data on research and development expenditures, work reorganization, and the like to support a conclusion that the quality of American goods is on the rise. This will make our goods more salable overseas, and decrease the relative attractiveness of foreign goods here.

The booming U.S. economy should also help increase foreign demand for dollars by making American firms attractive to foreign investors and acquirers. Morgan Stanley's Byron Wien, one of the more sensible trend-watchers on Wall Street, has recently raised his estimate of corporate earnings for this year and next. Even at previously anticipated, lower profit levels, foreigners were stepping up their acquisitions here—a process that requires them to buy dollars, thereby strengthening the currency.

But against these developments must be laid several less cheery facts. The first is that, despite some improvements, the U.S. trade deficit remains high. The National Association of Business Economists is estimating the full-year 1988 figure at $150 billion, and the 1989 level at $125 billion, both below 1987's $170 billion, but still considerable.

Add to that the growing burden of interest payments on money owed by the U.S. to foreigners, and the increased outflow of dividends to foreign owners of U.S. equities and other assets. In the first quarter of this year we paid out more in interest and dividends than we received from U.S. investments overseas. This caused our current account deficit—a broader measure than the trade deficit, because it includes investment earnings—to worsen at the beginning of this year.

Factor in, too, the probability that the recent rise in the dollar contains the seeds of its own reversal: dearer American goods will sell less well overseas, reducing the recent spectacular rate of growth in export sales. Indeed, it is this factor that worries Baker's critics: if he holds the dollar up, even for only a few months, the momentum building in export markets may disappear, and American manufacturers become too discouraged to expand production capacity as planned.

All in all, most observers see a further decline in the dollar as likely. Merrill Lynch's Michael Rosenberg expects that decline to resume shortly after the November elections. British brokers James Capel & Co. also predict a fourth-quarter sell-off, and expect it to be more severe if Dukakis rather than Bush is elected. Foreigners, they reason, will fear that costly Democratic social programs will increase the federal deficit, thereby weakening confidence in the dollar.

And economists in both the Bush and Dukakis camps agree that the dollar not only *will* fall further, but that it *must* do so if America is to whittle its trade deficit down to sustainable levels. Harvard's Martin Feldstein, one-time chairman of Reagan's Council of Economic Advisors and now a Bush advisor, has long been suggesting that a dollar in the neighborhood of 100 yen (it is at about 130 yen at this writing) will be required to make our exports cheap enough, and imports expensive enough, to bring our trade into some kind of balance. Lawrence Summers, Feldstein's Harvard colleague and a Dukakis man, agrees. So does Rudiger Dornbusch, of MIT : he sees the dollar dropping to 100 yen before the current account is brought into balance.

But Baker-Bush politics can, for a while at least, prevail over the underlying economic forces that are pressing on the dollar. Whether they can prevail until November remains to be seen. If not, rising interest rates, a sagging stock market, and a bit more inflation may be added to the catalogue of Bush's woes. If so, a newly elected President Bush will have to cope with the delayed further adjustment of the dollar when he takes office. Clearly, Bush sees the latter as the lesser evil. □

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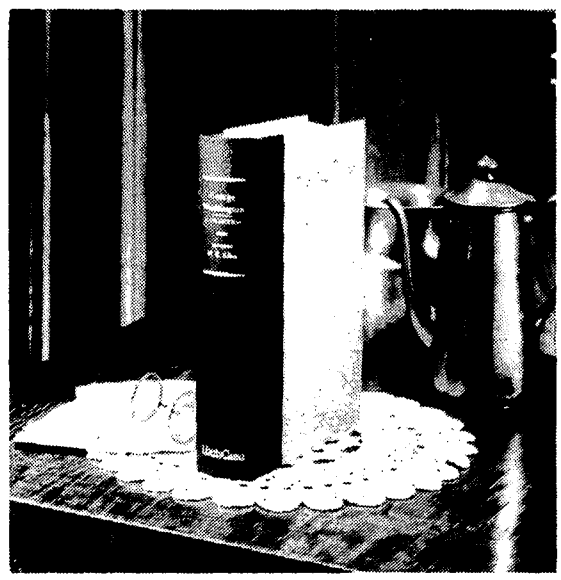

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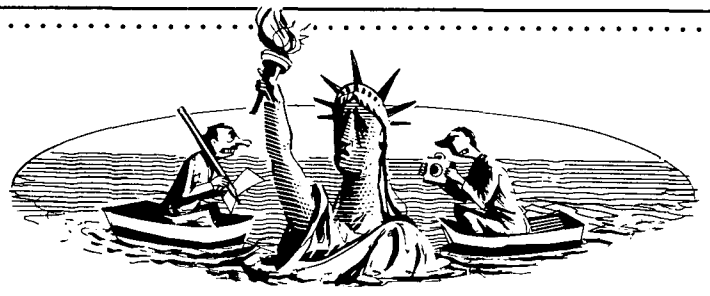

SILLY SEASONINGS

by Michael Ledeen

It's the silly season, and not just because of the nominating conventions of what are misguidedly called our political parties. For two days in the middle of July, there were virtually no bylines in the *Washington Post*, because of a labor dispute between the owners and the Writers Guild. Among a tiny handful of scabs who put their names on their articles: Walter Pincus, Jim Hoagland, and William Branigin. It was fun to have an entire front page with bylines like "Washington Post staff writer," and try to figure out who had written what. But the editorial page spoiled the fun, and carried only signed columns.

Speaking of the *Post* (and what better publication to speak of during the silly season), we have awarded it and its distinguished editor, Benjamin Bradlee, Sr., the spoil sport award for July. This cherished trophy (a bronze casting of the original bunch of sour grapes) was earned by the unsigned story on page 6 on July 9: "Post Wins 28 Newspaper Design Awards." Under this cheery headline, the lead paragraph bragged:

> The Washington Post has received 28 design awards this year from the Society of Newspaper Design, ranking The Post among the top three papers in the country in the number of awards for layouts and artwork in a newspaper.

However, you have to read all the way down to the sixth paragraph to find out that "the *Washington Times* won the most design awards this year, 38, including one for the best of the show."

Normally, in America, the winners get the headlines, and those (like the *Post* in this case) who finish tied for second and third place get honorable mention further down in the story. But the *Post* people, for whom magnanimity is believed to be an antacid rather than an appropriate attitude for journalists and editors, couldn't bring themselves to announce that their sole competitor had beaten them at something. So they buried it. And so we bestow upon them their bronze grapes.

Double Standards

Have you noticed that the Syrian army in recent months has driven the PLO out of Beirut, and carried out a massacre in a Palestinian "refugee camp" south of the city? Here and there you might have read some sparse coverage of these events. It is useful to remind ourselves that when Israel threatened to drive the PLO out of Beirut in 1982, the entire world moved as one to prevent it, and the American media unleashed a torrent of hostile reportage on the possible consequences of such a step. Israel bowed to the pressure. Syria did not receive any pressure, and carried out the policy. Where is John Chancellor? Why have Evans and Novak, the self-appointed overseers of high morality in the Middle East, not given us the inside story of Syria's adoption of the Sharon plan for West Beirut? Where, for that matter, are the leaders of the various Arab-American organizations, who have been curiously silent during the Syrian assaults? As for the massacre in the refugee camp, one wonders what happened to all those noble American journalists who gave us so many column yards about Sabra and Shatila. Are Palestinians murdered by Syrians less noble than Palestinians murdered by Phalangists?

Story of the Month I Bet You Missed

I don't think much of conspiracy theories as a general rule, but there was one little story in mid-July that really got me thinking deeply about the possibility of secret collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union. How else to explain the decision by the United States government to "stop granting exit interviews to those seeking to emigrate [from the Soviet Union] until October because of insufficient funding in the U.S. budget for settling political refugees"? This from the *Washington Post*'s fine Moscow correspondent, Gary Lee, on July 9.

Can you believe it? I expected to see dozens of angry columns and letters in our major media, but I didn't see any. And the *Post*, to its credit, even had the right headline: "U.S. Stops Giving Visas in Moscow."

So write to your Congressthing and tell it that the gulags are bad enough; the U.S. government doesn't have to help the Kremlin keep its citizens on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

The Disgrace of *Washington Jewish Week*

Little known outside journalistic circles and of course the Washington Jewish community, the *Washington Jewish Week* made a bit of a name for itself a few years ago when it was the first publication in the civilized world to reveal that there was a secret Israeli program to evacuate Ethiopian Jews. This irresponsible revelation—of a story known to every major publication, yet unreported because of the danger to the people involved—may have cost the lives of several thousand Ethiopian Jews, and certainly prevented or at least delayed the exodus, as the airlift was immediately suspended.

Now the same publication gives us an editorial (June 23) on Jonathan Jay Pollard, comparing him to the Rosenbergs (Julius and Ethel, the American Jews who stole American nuclear secrets at the behest of the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s). First, the editorialists at the *Week* complain about the treatment of the Rosenbergs (maybe they weren't guilty, how could the Jewish judge and the Jewish prosecuting attorney have been so vigorous in their treatment of the Rosenbergs, why did the "establishment" Jewish organizations not do anything for the Rosenbergs?), and then compare that case with Pollard. The language is astonishing:

> Like the Pollards, the foreign state the Rosenbergs allegedly had worked for had

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Michael Ledeen's new book, Perilous Statecraft: An Insider's Account of the Iran-Contra Affair, *will be released by Scribner's in September.*

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been an ally, not an enemy, country and the motive was ideological, not mercenary. (Their activities took place during World War II, when America and Russia were allies . . .) Yet like the Pollards, the Rosenbergs received a sentence much harsher than that of non-Jews convicted of similar offenses . . .

It is too late today to reverse the harsh and unjust sentence received by the Rosenbergs and restore them to life. But perhaps something can still be done for the Pollards.

It is hard to imagine a more wrongheaded editorial. First, the idea that the Rosenbergs "allegedly" worked for the Soviet Union. In addition to the excellent book by Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton (*The Rosenberg File*) of a few years ago, William Corson and Robert Crowley tell us in *The New KGB* that

The incontrovertible evidence of the Rosenbergs' complicity was never used. It consisted of NKVD cipher traffic, intercepted and decrypted by the United States, which identified the members of the net by name. The former chief of the FBI unit that handled the case has unsuccessfully sought the public release of the intercepts . . .

Second, the notion that the Rosenbergs were only helping an "ally." *They* may have considered the postwar Soviet Union an ally (the Rosenbergs carried out espionage well after the war was over), but the United States government certainly didn't. Third, the notion that the Rosenbergs' sentence was "unjust." Was passing American nuclear secrets to the Kremlin not treason? And did treason not carry a death sentence?

That brings us to the Pollards. The claim that the Pollards should have been given lenient treatment because they were "helping an ally" of the United States simply doesn't stand up. First of all, if an official of the United States government wants to help an ally, he has many official ways in which to do it; espionage is not made any the less heinous if ostensibly carried out for a friendly country. Which brings us to point number two: if one is recruited by foreign intelligence officers, one does not necessarily know for whom those officers are really working. If you were an intelligence officer of the KGB, would you not try to recruit some Americans to help you by claiming that you were an official of some friendly government? This is known as "false flag recruitments," which go on all the time. Treason is not in the eye of the beholder; it is a specific, illegal, and despicable act. The Pollards did it, and they deserve to sit in jail for a very long time. The *Jewish Week* is out of line. Again.

The Ethics of Anonymous Sources

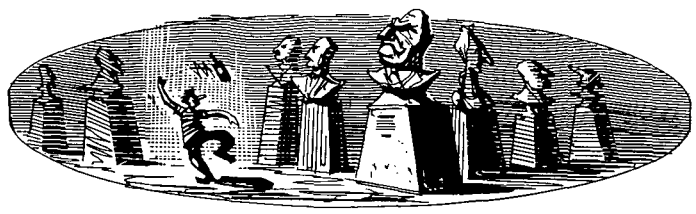
There is a bit of quiet hand-wringing going on within the journalistic community in Washington following the revelations of Pentagon influence-peddling. Almost all the original information given to the press came from government officials under conditions of anonymity. For a while, the *New York Times* declined to print some of the information because, in the words of an internal memorandum written by *Times* editor Max Frankel, "we do not want to let unidentified official sources use us to circulate charges against identifiable people when they provide no named complainants or other verifiable evidence."

It's a good point (although the *Times*, along with every other publication and network, caved in shortly thereafter, once the information appeared elsewhere). But it's not the most important point. The real issue is whether allegations in the form of leaks, without supporting evidence, should be published at all. This month I have only enough space to raise the issue; next month I'll devote most of the column to this matter. But the easiest way to summarize the dilemma is to state the unfortunate fact of life in contemporary American politics: the underlying principle of our entire legal system—a man is innocent until proven guilty—has been turned topsy-turvy. Nowadays, when a person is accused in the press, he is considered guilty until he manages to prove his innocence. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, when you are accused of something in the press, officialdom treats you as a moral and ethical leper. And so great is the impact of the media coverage that even if you are ultimately cleared, you have been severely damaged. Remember the plaintive call of Ray Donovan: "Where do I go to get my reputation back?"

Dear Max Frankel: full marks for your ethical concerns. Would that more of your colleagues in the media took it slow, refrained from publishing right away, and thought harder about the consequences of publication. That in itself is worthy of note. But don't stop there. Take on the ethical dilemma in its entirety. The principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is a fine one, and is every bit as important as the First Amendment.

More next time. □

EMINENTOES



KING OF THE JUICE

by Edward McFadden

"If you can't eat their food, drink their booze, screw their women, and then vote against their bills, you have no business being up here."
—Former California Speaker of the Assembly Jesse Unruh

Growing up in the segregated town of Mineola, Texas, forty years ago, Willie Brown shined shoes in the local barbershop. His customers would flip Brown's quarter gratuity into the spittoon in the corner of the shop, laughing as the boy groped through the muck to retrieve his pay.

Today, Brown cuts quite a different figure on the streets of Sacramento, California, wearing $1,500 Brioni suits, cruising in his $100,000 Ferrari, or escorting beautiful women to one of the tony dining spots he favors. Today he is Willie L. Brown, Speaker of the California Assembly.

He flaunts it—with fire and brimstone speeches on the floor of the house, legendary parties, rock video cameo appearances, regular mentions in California gossip columns, and patented arm-twisting as the self-styled "Ayatollah of the Assembly." "If you can't wear it, drive it, or make love to it, I don't want it," he says. "My body would reject a Plymouth."

In a state where star power, if harnessed, could light the city of Burbank, Willie Brown has been the lone luminary in an otherwise dim political scene. But after twenty-four years as a supernova, his state career seems to be guttering out, a victim of an internal rebellion in his statehouse, national political machinations, and what in California is called the "juice."

In 1951 Brown left Mineola on a Greyhound bus bound for San Francisco. After working his way through college and law school, he fashioned a career as a brash, radical attorney, drawing his clients from the sediment of San Francisco: whores, pimps, petty thieves. Within the paradoxes of San Francisco liberalism, such a law practice is a good way to build stature, and in 1964 Brown won the only elective office he has ever held, representing California's 17th District, a political quiltwork that today ranges from the wealthy matrons of Pacific Heights to the homosexuals of the Castro district. In those early years, his politics approached the violent radicalism of the Black Panther movement. Under the tutelage of such prominent state Democrats as the late Speaker of the Assembly Jesse "Big Daddy" Unruh, the late Congressman Phil Burton, Assemblyman John Burton, and the late San Francisco mayor George Moscone, Brown moderated his views enough to parlay their connections, expertise, and money into a political machine that eventually reached into the state capitol, San Francisco City Hall, and congressional offices in Washington, D.C.

As Brown's power grew, his law firm's clientele improved. He no longer defends the owners of "nude-encounter" parlors; in time the department store magnate Carter Hawley Hale,

Edward McFadden is The American Spectator*'s editorial intern. Eric Ueland assisted in the research and preparation of this article.*

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Southern Pacific Development Company, the Federal Reserve Bank, and many others in need of counsel recognized Brown's lawyerly gifts—to the extent that this part-time attorney now makes, by some estimates, nearly a quarter of a million dollars yearly in fees.

In 1980, through a coalition of Democratic and Republican support, Brown gained the Speakership of the Assembly. In a state of volatile politics, Brown has managed to retain his position a record seven-and-a-half years. Unlike leaders in many other statehouses whose power has been eroded by "reform," the California speaker has been a near despot, with sole responsibility for determining committee memberships, appointing committee chairmen, and setting the legislative agenda.

But there is more to Brown's power than constitutional prerogative—there is also the "juice," provided by the "third house" of the California legislature, the lobbying organizations. Juice lobbyists prowl the halls of the state capitol with briefcases full of checks made out to various re-election campaigns. The more prestigious a member's committee assignments, of course, the more money an assemblyman can expect in his campaign coffers. Brown's total control of such assignments thus allows him regulatory privileges over the flow of the juice, a privilege other members of the Assembly would like to possess.

The Speaker considers keeping the Democratic majority in the house an integral part of his job, and as political campaigns in California have become increasingly expensive to run (an average of $250,000), Brown has been forced to raise ever larger sums of money to keep his party in power. The juice lobby has become the easiest form of financial support in the state capital. In 1984, running for re-election against a political neophyte, Brown amassed a campaign fund of $4,079,037, including a single donation of $124,753 from the California Trial Lawyers Association. In 1987, a non-election year, Brown saved his pennies and had $1.6 million in his kitty by the end of the year; 85 percent of the donors were firms, corporations, businesses, and coalitions. With more than $3 million expected this year, Brown will easily break the $4 million mark.

Much of this money goes to loyal associates in need of funds for their own campaigns. Brown used this financial assistance program to cement the symbiotic relationship within his caucus that has enabled him to control the Assembly since 1980. Of late, though, there have been signs that the program hasn't exempted Brown from the traditional political machinations of the statehouse; over the past year, five moderate Democrats have been waging an open rebellion against Brown and the foundation of his power.

The Gang of Five, as the upstarts have been dubbed by *Sacramento Bee* political columnist Dan Walters, represent the growing number of middle-of-the-road California Democrats that have emerged over the past ten years in central and southern California. Steve Peace, Rusty Areias, Gary Condit, Charles Calderon, and Gerald Eaves are young Democrats who a year ago were considered trusted members of the Democratic caucus, and Brown rewarded them appropriately with superior office space, larger staffs, and choice committee assignments. But no longer.

Gang members say they grew weary of Brown's use of the "juice" for political gain, a distraction that has kept the Speaker from establishing a clear Democratic blueprint and advanced the perception that the party is merely out to cadge a buck. Moreover, the Five claim that the ideological dynamics of their caucus has changed during the past several years, evolving from a 1960s left-wing approach on social and environmental issues, represented by Brown, to the more "moderate" brand of Democratic policy seen during the Reagan years. Brown, they say, has turned to a small group of twelve to fifteen liberal cronies, most prominently Maxine "Mama Doc" Waters and Tom Hayden, to push a legislative agenda out of step with California Democrats.

The rebellion began with little fanfare in September 1987. Choosing an issue the GOP could support, a Gang of Five/Republican caucus coalition defied Brown and the California Trial Lawyers, steering a tort reform bill out of committee onto the floor of the house, where it passed overwhelmingly. Brown, who last year received $35,000 from the Trial Lawyers, then attempted to quell the insurrection by stripping the Five of their committee assignments and staff, and moving them into ridiculously small office space.

Rather than back down, the Five publicly declared their defiance of the Speaker; since January, with selected Republican support, they have chipped away at the Speaker's power. When the Five were with him, Brown possessed a 44-36 Democratic majority. Without them the Speaker can only count on 39 votes in a house which needs a majority of 41 to pass any type of motion.

Since last fall the coalition has removed three bills—dealing with the death penalty, AIDS testing, and drug enforcement—from committee graveyards where Brown and left-wing allies had buried them, and seen all pass. When a Brown loyalist tried to gut one of the bills with an amendment, the Speaker warned, "That takes 41 votes. I don't want to demonstrate too often that I don't have 41 votes anymore."

One would suppose that the infighting within the Democratic caucus should have the Republicans seizing their chance to dump a man they regularly vilify in campaign literature. But Brown endures thanks to a split in the GOP caucus over how to approach the conflict—a split Brown has understandably encouraged. Under Brown, Republican leader Patrick Nolan has enjoyed an unprecedented degree of influence in the Assembly, with input in committee assignments, chairmanships, and bill schedulings, and he now returns the favor by refusing to support the Gang of Five in their attempts to replace the Speaker with a more moderate Democrat.

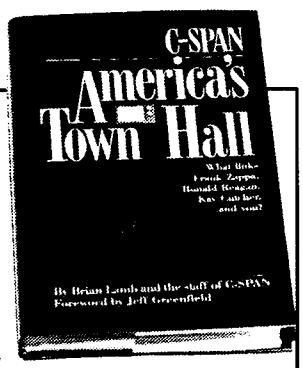
On a practical level, the state GOP leadership likes Willie Brown because of what his antics in the Assembly do for their own fund-raising. Running against the Speaker has netted them millions since 1980; a less-colorful Democrat would mean less money. Since April, therefore, motions to remove Brown from the Speakership have failed to win approval from the Republican caucus. Nolan defends his actions by swearing that a fellow Democrat will not replace Brown in the Speaker's chair. "If we traded Willie Brown for a Tom Hayden, it would be like rearranging the deck of the *Titanic*," said a Republican assemblyman.

Nolan's perceived protection of Brown has not won him points within his own caucus, whose many members are beginning to feel the wrath of their constituents. To the folks at home, "it looks like the Republicans are propping him [Brown] up," said Assemblyman Trice Harvey. "Our opportunity is here. . . . It's been embarrassing to me to see five [Democrats] stand up against the Speaker."

Nolan yearns for the political spotlight as well. (When the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Jim Wright, recently spoke in the California State Capitol, Nolan staged a Republican walk-out, embarrassing Brown and garnering Nolan national press coverage.) Sacramento insiders say the Republican leader is gambling on gaining majority control of the Assembly in the upcoming election and taking the seat for himself. Since the reapportionment battle of 1980—when the liberal factions in Sacramento gerrymandered the state to lock in Democratic dominance for a decade—the Republicans and conservative wing of the Democratic party have made deep inroads into southern and central California. Polls give a mixed picture, but it's unlikely that Nolan's gamble will pay off. More likely, the Democrats will snag three additional seats from the Republicans this fall. In that case Brown will no longer need the Gang of Five, nor the Republicans, to stay in business.

But the Speaker faces a more immediate problem. In the June primary, California voters took away Brown's "juice" by passing a constitutional amendment limiting the amount of contributions a person or group can make to any one candidate, and forbidding the transfer of such funds from one campaign to another. The amendment, which mirrors federal election campaign laws, will undoubtedly slow the juice; no longer will Brown raise big money as easily as the two million dollars he raked in over an eight-month period since November, and no longer will he be able to fatten his favorites' purses with transfers.

Brown publicly insists that he will remain Speaker for years to come. He faces increasing difficulties at home—a San Francisco radio call-in poll recently named Brown the "most loathsome" man in public life and even the city's largest gay political club, a Brown mainstay, refused to endorse him in the June primary. In response, Brown has attempted to construct a golden parachute. He chose Jesse Jackson as his new Greyhound bus to



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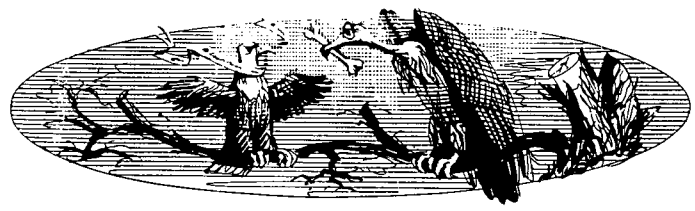
the national stage, signing up in November 1987 as Jesse's national campaign chairman, and raising over one million dollars for Jackson's California campaign. Brown also helped arrange the political summit earlier this year in Washington between Jackson and Democratic party elders.

Brown's ability to attract attention and deftly play party politics is often offset by his political ambitions and inability to control his own candor. As a result, Brown's parachute seems to have turned to lead. He began a "Jackson for Vice President" push immediately after the Pennsylvania primary in late April, while the candidate was still running hard for the top spot, and appeared to be putting his own political career before the Leader's when he spoke to the national press about who would "cut the cards" at the National Convention, and the necessity of "Jackson-like" (i.e., Willie Brown-like) speakers in Atlanta. Jesse was not pleased. Brown was publicly taken to the woodshed, and no longer serves the campaign in any active capacity.

Still, Brown gained stature, influence, and prestige on the national level with his work for Jackson—particularly his fund-raising work. For that reason, political insiders like the *Bee*'s Walters think Brown will preempt any move to oust him from the Speakership by jumping at the opportunity only the National Democratic Committee can provide, becoming a "West Coast Robert Strauss." (Media wanna-be Democratic presidential candidate Mario Cuomo has already sought Brown's assistance in fund-raising in California.) No one is doubting that Brown can make it in the national political arena. But can "The King of the Juice" successfully make the transition without the power that gave him all he today surveys? □

THE NATION'S PULSE



CIRCUMSCHISM

by Charlotte Low Allen

At the local Lefebvrite parish in Northern Virginia, the congregation was reacting to the split with Rome with a textbook demonstration of the first of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief: denial. "Excommunicated? I've never felt that I was in communion with those people who won't even kneel to receive Our Lord," said an elderly man in a shiny suit at the after-mass coffee-and-donut hour. By "those people," he was referring to what Lefebvrites call "the conciliar church." That's the Roman Catholic Church to everyone else, of course—minus Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his estimated 100,000 clerical and lay followers worldwide.

After the Second Vatican Council, many Catholic churches chopped up their communion rails and hauled them off to the city dump in one of those efforts to make the laity feel more relaxed in church. More sixties airheadedness, one might say, but to Lefebvre and his followers, it was another component of a vast and powerful conspiracy of Protestants, Freemasons, Marxists, modernists, and the devil to condemn the Church and its hundreds of millions of members to perdition. Christ promised His Church that the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. Lefebvre and his followers believe that they alone are standing with their shoulders against those gates, like the boy with his finger in the dike.

That is why, when Pope John Paul II excommunicated the 82-year-old Lefebvre and the four bishops consecrated by Lefebvre at Ecône, Switzerland, on June 30 in defiance of Vatican orders (John Paul had already vetoed all four), Lefebvre responded with complex legal and linguistic arguments as to why no schism actually exists. (He raised the legal defense of necessity, arguing that he had to do what he did because of the emergency state of the church.) "I would call it the Roman apostasy," said the Rev. Richard Williamson, 48, one of the four excommunicated new bishops.

At Sunday mass at the Lefebvrite church, St. Athanasius in Vienna, Virginia, it was hard to know whether to laugh or to cry. It is not actually a church, but a suburban tract house in the middle of a large drought-bleached lawn, around the periphery of which the parishioners park their cars with their "Pray the Rosary" bumper stickers. The church proper occupies what was apparently once a basement recreation room: a low-ceiling space crammed with hand-me-down pews, auditorium chairs, kneelers, a makeshift confessional, innumerable statues of varying sizes, a communion rail (natch), and an altar with nicely pressed cloths and a handsome silk-curtained tabernacle.

The excommunications had not cooled the ardor or number at St. Athanasius Church. All ninety or so seats were filled, a typical Sunday crowd that ranged in age from a large number of oldsters to teenagers, toddlers, and babes in arms. Lefebvrite women take seriously St. Paul's injunction that women cover their distracting tresses in church, and all the St. Athanasius females, from tots to grannies, wore lace veils. Assessing the meaning of these demographics—the relatively high proportion of young people—was tough, because it was such a small crowd and many of them had driven in from as far away as Rich-

Charlotte Low Allen is a senior editor of Insight *magazine.*

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mond and Annapolis. Some were obviously there primarily for the old-fashioned liturgy.

The mass was in Latin, of course, the old Tridentine Mass that Pope Pius V made mandatory for the Western church in 1570 and which Pope Paul VI superseded with a revised, vernacular mass called the Novus Ordo in 1969. John Paul allowed a strictly limited revival of the Tridentine Mass in 1984. For Catholics used to the new mass, where dialogue between celebrant and congregation and half-hearted congregational singing are the rule, attending a Tridentine Mass can be an eerie experience. Utter silence is required of the congregation, who are supposed to follow along in their prayer books (virtually everyone at St. Athanasius carried a worn, quarter-century-old missal). Many of the priestly prayers, said always with the priest's back to the congregation, are silent as well.

There is a certain dignity and drama to the old mass, however, that can be matched in the new but rarely is. The major virtue of the Tridentine Mass is that its implacable rigidity of form allows no tampering. At St. Athanasius the Sanctus bells still ring, the altar boys are still boys, and no one ever shows up in Bermudas or chews on the Host. Nonetheless, joining the Lefebvrites requires a taste for endless disputes over shadings of meaning and interpretation of texts that would give most Catholics a headache. At the coffee hour at St. Athanasius, several parishioners were engaged in heated discussion of one of their favorite topics: the Novus Ordo translation of the language of the Consecration in which the priest transforms wine into the Blood of Christ. "*Pro vobis et pro multis effundetur,*" goes the Latin text. Literally, this means that the Precious Blood "is shed for you and for many," but for some reason the new mass turned "for many" into "for all men" and lately, with the rise of women's liberation, into "for all." One parishioner solemnly assured me that this blooper makes Jesus out to be a universalist and voids the efficacy of the entire mass. St. Athanasius is said to be trying to negotiate legitimate status for itself with the diocese of Arlington, Virginia, as a center for Tridentine masses under the 1984 indult, but such attitudes could make for rocky dialogue.

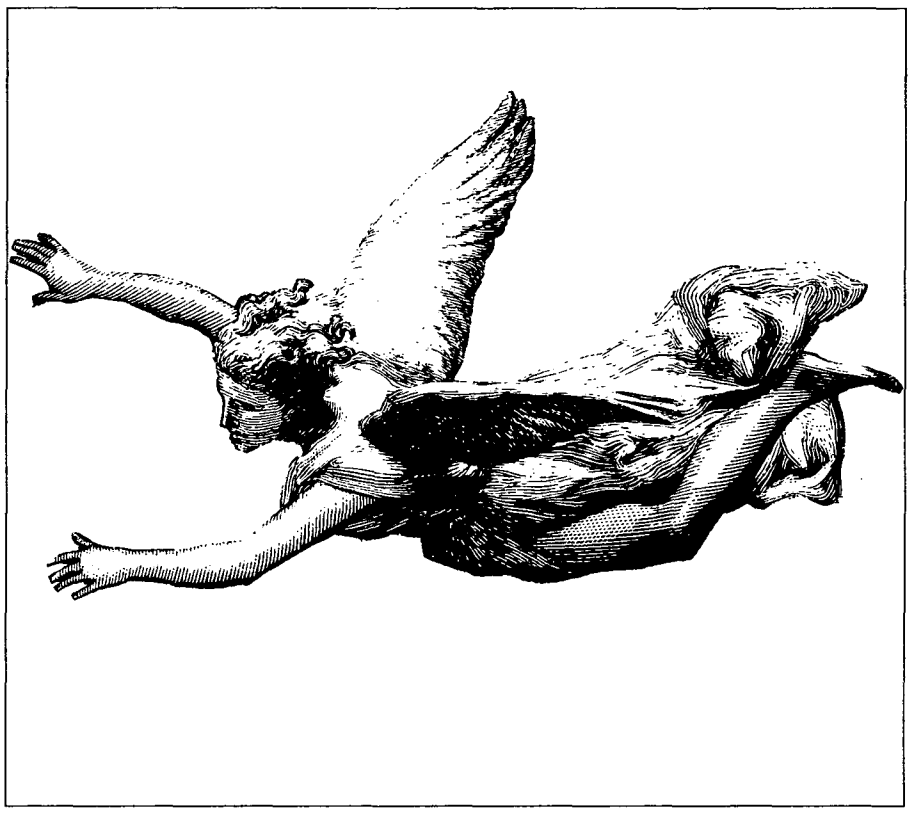
One could similarly spend hours in fruitless argument over linguistic nuances with the Rev. Ronald Ringrose, the pastor at St. Athanasius. Ringrose, a slight, fortyish man who wore steel-rimmed spectacles and a not-incongruous pair of black leather athletic shoes with his cassock, commissioned a highly publicized Gallup survey in 1984 showing that 53 percent of Catholics would attend the Tridentine Mass if it were offered at convenient times and places. Interestingly, Ringrose is not a member of Lefebvre's Society of St. Pius X, who comprise his most loyal followers. He was ordained in 1979 as a diocesan Catholic priest after graduating from Mt. St. Mary's Seminary at Emmitsburg, Maryland, praised as one of the best in the country for learning orthodox Catholic doctrine.

He spent three years battling liberals and getting disillusioned in a Maryland parish, while reading "traditionalist" literature, as he calls it, for the first time. In 1982, he left to be pastor at St. Athanasius, which has been in existence since the early 1970s. His departure from Maryland was more or less with the blessing of Baltimore's Archbishop William Borders, he said, but under an interdiction not to say mass publicly. Ringrose later had himself reordained by Lefebvre. Although the archbishop's followers recognize the validity of ordinations in the "conciliar church," priests often get reordained "to allay possible doubts" by their new flocks, says Bishop Williamson.

Ringrose has about six times the mental candlepower of the average Catholic priest—and, sad to say, of the average Lefebvrite layman. The same is true of the outspoken, now excommunicated Bishop Williamson, although Williamson displays a certain lack of the *gravitas* one might expect from a prince of the Church, where the most circumspect, even platitudinal demeanor is the rule. You can tell that Williamson is a bishop *sans* diocese. English-born, he matriculated at Lefebvre's headquarters in Ecône after trying several British seminaries and now heads the Pius X Society's 50-student St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, which just moved from Ridgefield, Connecticut to Winona, Minnesota (about two-thirds of the seminarians are sons of older Lefebvrites). Perhaps in imitation of his mentor at Econe, Williamson takes a very hard line on just about every issue pertaining to the schism. The new mass, he pronounced, is "an engine designed for the destruction of the Catholic Church." Catholics who stick with "the conciliar church" can just about give up any hope of saving their souls: "The doctrine is often false and the practices are false," Williamson declared.

Asked how God could designate a splinter religion as virtually the only means of salvation for His children, Williamson answered: "The Lord God is putting us all to the test. We all have to sit down and do our homework on where He can be found." Williamson prophesies the utter destruction of the West by the Soviet Union in the near future, a form of divine punishment that will force the Catholic Church, under either this stiff-necked Pope or another, finally to repent and see the Lefebvrite light. Those who want to repent right now can visit the St. Thomas Aquinas buildings in Ridgefield, now reopened as the St. Ignatius Retreat House under St. Pius X auspices. "It's an old-fashioned, knock-down, drag-out Catholic retreat house," explained Williamson. I mentioned that my Catholic girls' school used to force us in preconciliar times through such retreats, which included grueling days of absolute silence punctuated by priestly harangues. "Brings back happy memories, does it?" the bishop joked.

The most gruesome aspect of this movement is not its Manichean conspiracy theories that involve the unwitting participation of almost everyone else on earth (and below). It is the undertone of despair—in the sense of the word that pertains to one's own salvation. "Many are called, but few are chosen," said Christ, and the Lefebvrites couldn't agree more; their heaven is as sparsely populated as a suburb zoned for five-acre lots. This is a revival of sorts of Jansenism, with its Calvinist emphasis on the weakness and corruption of the human will (ironic for a system that regularly blasts the "false religions" of Protestantism). It is not surprising that Lefebvrism is the creation of a French prelate and that its following is strongest in France. The underside of the optimistic skepticism of Descartes has always been the pessimistic skepticism of Pascal. "*L'homme, c'est une passion inutile,*" wrote Sartre, and Lefebvre might well agree.



Jansenist gloom has been a particular affliction of the Catholic ultra-right, who sometimes seem to spend as much of their energies in efforts to purge deviationism among their allies as in fighting the numerous genuine abuses in today's Church. It might surprise many orthodox Catholics, whose admiration for Pope John Paul II is boundless, to learn that the pontiff is not all that popular among the ultras. Orthodox Catholics are used to hearing the Pope vilified by liberals for failing to give his papal benediction to the gay-rights movement, "responsible" extra-marital sex, and in vitro fertilization. But on the far right, where Lefebvre fellow-travelers abound, the Pope is regarded as a man of questionable philosophical training (phenomenology, not Thomism), mushy-left politics (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* didn't help), and just plain softness.

The fallout from all of this could be a boon for those who would like to see a sense of the sacred return to the liturgy: In an effort to lure back Lefebvrites, the Pope has promised to widen the availability of the old mass, still resisted by many bishops ("a bait-and-switch operation," warned Bishop Williamson of the Pope's maneuver). Schisms tend to beget further schisms, and the Lefebvrite movement has already been rocked by a few. In 1983, the Society of St. Pius X spun off the Society of St. Pius V, confusing those with a weak command of Roman numerals. Lefebvre's impending death may engender more chaos. "We don't want to go the way of the Old Catholics," said a St. Athanasius parishioner, referring to a group that condemned itself to obscurity when in 1870 it broke with the Church over the newly defined doctrine of papal infallibility. But that way just might be inevitable. □

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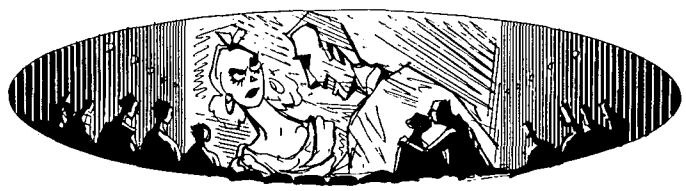

RABBIT, RUN

by Bruce Bawer

You've probably already seen *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, but if you haven't, whip off those reading glasses and hop like a bunny over to your nearest theater. This film—which does a breathtaking, state-of-the-art job of combining live action with animation—is, quite simply, the closest thing I've ever seen to a perfect piece of film entertainment. Not only is it wonderful, it reminds you what the word *wonderful* really means: it excites wonder, astonishes you, causes you to marvel. And don't wait for it to show up on cable either, or on broadcast TV: this is the kind of movie you have to see at a movie theater.

It is, in short, an exhilarating, magical experience. At this writing, I've seen *Roger* four times (in two weeks), and as far as I'm concerned, you have to see it *at least* three times: the first time to gasp in amazement at the technical achievement and, after fifteen minutes or so, to forget the technical achievement entirely and fall into a glorious, childlike belief in the whole magnificent illusion (and laugh at the jokes); the second time to follow the Byzantine suspense plot more carefully, to note that virtually everything in the second half of the film is foreshadowed in the first half, and to recognize how wonderfully organized and tightly plotted it is (and laugh at the jokes); the third time to look closely at all that technical stuff and drive yourself crazy trying to figure out how the hell they did it (and laugh at the jokes). With each visit, you notice delightful, funny little details that you hadn't noticed before; you grow increasingly respectful of the actors—especially Bob Hoskins and Joanna Cassidy—for their ability to make you believe that they actually are interacting with Roger and Jessica Rabbit; and you get more and more tickled with Roger himself (splendidly dubbed by Charles Fleischer), a cartoon character as memorable, lovable, and hilarious as any you can name. After watching this movie, you think endlessly about how many things could have gone wrong—a single part miscast, a single scene in which the illusion just didn't come off—and how disastrous it would have been if just one of them had, and how incredible it is that none of them did. You think about what a mess the typical movie is (and after seeing *Roger*, how easy a typical movie seems to make!), and what a flawless piece of work this most technically challenging and directorially problematic one has turned out to be.

Among other things, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* is a tribute to the golden age of the American cartoon, an age which peaked around 1947, the year in which the film is set. Most of the major cartoon characters of that era—Disney's Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse, for instance, and Warner Brothers' Bugs Bunny, Tweety, Yosemite Sam, and Daffy Duck—are featured in cameos (with, as always, the versatile Mel Blanc doing many of the Warners voices). The film is, in fact, a co-production of Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment and Touchstone Films, a division of Disney; the Disney Studios, and Walt himself, are both name-dropped in the script. But the film's look and feel and *Weltanschauung* are pure Warner Brothers—and thank goodness. For, Disney's grand *Fantasia* notwithstanding, those zippy, sophisticated Warners cartoons of the early postwar years—the "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies"—represent the zenith of American cartoon-making: they had a sensibility, a species of humor, and a wacky but thoroughly consistent set of physical laws all their own. If a Warners character found himself in midair, for instance, he didn't fall until he looked down and *noticed* he was in midair. What's more, the Warners cartoon characters were unkillable: Wile E. Coyote routinely got blasted to bits in one scene and was perfectly fine again in the next. (This was not at all the rule in Disney cartoons: remember Bambi's mother?) These same physical laws apply for the cartoon characters in *Roger*. Likewise, the Warners cartoons had a colorful vocabulary that was all their own. Words like *simoleon* and *zillion* proliferated; if an American city was mentioned, it was likely to be some place with a funny name like Walla Walla, Cucamonga, or Kokomo; if a commercial product appeared onscreen, its brand name was invariably "Acme." These details, too, are remembered in *Roger*.

What makes *Roger* different from the golden-age cartoons is that, in the world imagined by this film, the cartoon characters live in the same dimension as the rest of us. They're not mere drawings but actual beings known as "toons" who live in a Los Angeles community called Toontown, and earn a living by acting in cartoons that have been written, directed, and produced by humans. It doesn't seem possible to sustain such a conceit for nearly two hours, but director Robert Zemeckis, writers Jeffrey Price and Peter Seamon (whose script is adapted from Gary K. Wolf's novel, *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*), and an army of animators (*Roger*'s credits seem to last almost as long as the picture itself) succeed in integrating the human and toon physical laws, as well as the distinct human and toon ways of viewing the world, with remarkable wit, coherence, and imagination. (They also manage to work in a multitude of funny allusions to famous detective movies, among them *The Maltese Falcon* and *Chinatown*.) Only a moment passes before you buy the gimmick completely, and at no point in the film—not even when the hero, human private-eye Eddie Valiant (Hoskins), pays a visit to Toontown (a sequence that might easily have gone a bit too far and destroyed the illusion completely)—does your belief in it all falter.

Roger, to say the least, whets your appetite for animation. But to look at Saturday morning TV after seeing this film is to be reminded just how witless and inelegant most children's cartoons are nowadays, and how rare an exception *Roger* really is. Some critics have been saying (it's the closest thing most of them have to a major complaint about the film) that *Roger*, splendid

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator's movie reviewer.

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though it may be, is for adults more than it is for children. To borrow a phrase from the Warners lexicon, that's a load of succotash. Once upon a time it was understood—by cartoon makers and critics alike—that wit and sophistication were not for adults only. I know that my own favorite cartoons, in my childhood, were those in which an occasional joke routinely went over my head. Though I didn't fully grasp them, I was entertained by these cartoons; I recognized and appreciated their cleverness; they created a world that was, to a small child, rich, baroque, and mysterious—indeed, well-nigh symbolistic. Those cartoons succeeded for the same reason that *Roger* does: their creators didn't condescend to the audience; they wrote and drew things that made *them* laugh, simple as that. Since those days, cartoons have suffered a fate similar to that of elementary-school textbooks: they've been watered down, dumbed-down, vetted by humorless educators and child psychologists for social responsibility and political correctness; they've had all the magic and the joy committee-meetinged out of them. As if that weren't bad enough, the high price of animation has, in addition, drastically reduced the technical quality of most cartoons; thus watching Saturday morning network fare nowadays is, in more than one way, a grim experience. If the achievement and reception of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* don't do something, at least, to reverse this trend, nothing will.

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Film notes: Some thoughts on colorization and the law. On June 30, a *New York Times* story by Andrew L. Yarrow reported that the House of Representatives had voted to establish something called the National Film Preservation Advisory Board, which would be empowered to "select up to 25 films a year that represent 'an enduring part of our nation's historical and cultural heritage.' " Those films selected "would be included in a National Film Registry and given a commission seal that could be used for promotion. If altered versions of these films were distributed or exhibited, they would have to be labeled as 'materially altered' or 'colorized,' with a disclaimer that 'certain creative contributors did not participate.' " The thirteen-member board would include among its members the presidents of the American Film Institute, the Directors Guild, and the University Film and Video Association, as well as the chairmen of the film departments at UCLA and NYU. Ye gods.

Now, I deplore the coloring—or "colorization," as the process has come to be known—of films without the consent of the producer or director. If you've ever seen Claudette Colbert flashing bluish-green teeth in *Boom Town* you know what I mean. Perhaps something *should* be done to prevent it. But an advisory board most certainly isn't the answer. It's simply not the government's business to decide which American films—or books or musical compositions, for that matter—are classics. If the creators of one film have the right to be accorded disclaimers in cases of colorization, then the creators of all films have that right.

One can imagine supporters of this measure comparing it to the practice of giving certain buildings landmark status for the purpose of protecting them from drastic alterations or the wrecker's ball. But this analogy doesn't work. Buildings play a civic role that films and novels don't, and landmarking is simply one of many ways—along with zoning laws, building codes, and safety regulations—in which government exercises its regulatory rights over them. Besides, classic films exist in multiple copies; buildings don't. The production of colorized prints of, say, *It's a Wonderful Life* doesn't entail the destruction of the extant black-and-white copies of the film.

Nor can this proposed board be compared to one of the national endowments, such as the NEA or the NEH. Though I'd hardly jump at the opportunity to defend those endowments (whose work often amounts to little more than government-subsidized literary or academic log-rolling), it can at least be said that they don't presume to accord preferential legal status to certain artists and art works; they just hand out money.

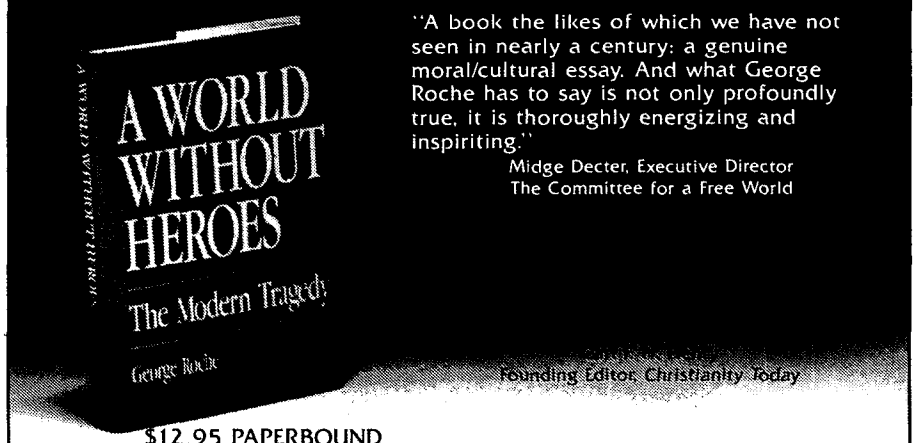
• • •

The other day, while I was perusing two adjacent newspaper advertisements—one for *Coming to America*, in which Eddie Murphy towers over the New York skyline, and the other for *Crocodile Dundee II*, in which Paul Hogan and a curvaceous friend likewise tower over the same skyline—it occurred to me that someday our descendants will watch a few representative American movies of the eighties and will conclude that there weren't any cities in America besides New York. How many more times are we going to have to watch an awestruck out-of-town protagonist (whether Hogan in *Crocodile Dundee* or Bette Midler in *Big Business*) gaze at everything from the skyscrapers along Sixth Avenue to the lowlifes in Times Square? When are scriptwriters going to grow tired of setting scenes in Rockefeller Center, cinematographers cease dwelling upon the reflection of the Manhattan skyline in the East River, directors stop aiming their cameras down Park Avenue toward the Pan Am Building? In a world as big as this one, I found it ridiculous that both *Big* and *Big Business*—to speak only of recent films—contain major sequences set in the famous Fifth Avenue toy store F.A.O. Schwarz. Among other reasons, I go to the movies to see places I've never been; most of the location shots in *Big Business* took place within three blocks of the theater I saw the movie in.

Woody Allen? An exception. He has something to say about New York; it's the part of the world he knows and understands best. In the movies I'm talking about, by contrast, New York's not even a setting, really—it's just a backdrop. □

A WORLD WITHOUT HEROES:
THE MODERN TRAGEDY

By George Roche



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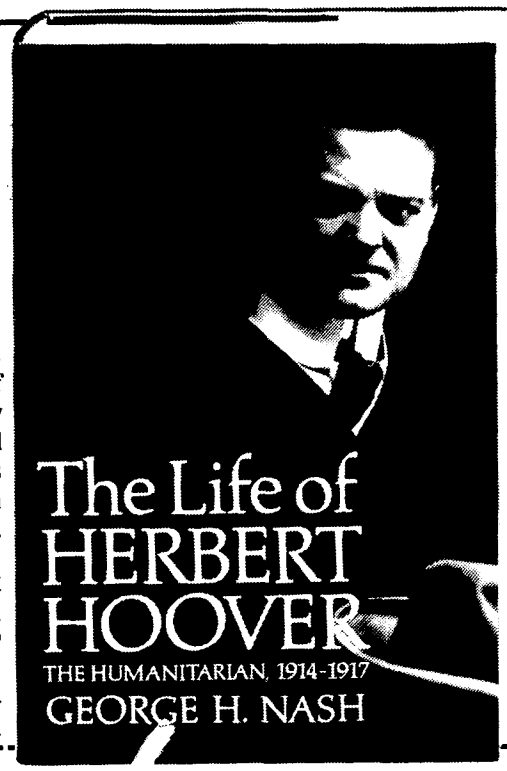

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Hilton Kramer

In five years it may be as dangerous to praise Stalin as it was to attack him two years ago. But I should not regard this as an advance. Nothing is gained by teaching a parrot a new word.

—George Orwell, in September 1946.

Orwell's remarkable prophecy, made while Stalin still ruled, proved to be off by only five years. It was not until 1956, a decade later, that Nikita Khrushchev delivered his historic speech on Stalin's crimes before the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the USSR. There was no talk then of glasnost or perestroika. Indeed, it will be recalled that Khrushchev's denunciation of the so-called "cult of Stalin's person" was originally meant to remain a "secret" report to the party faithful. But the speech itself nonetheless led to one of those periodic "thaws" that have now become a familiar feature of Soviet political and cultural life in the post-Stalin era—thaws that, until now anyway, have always proved to be short-lived.

As far as Soviet literature is concerned, unquestionably the most important result of Khrushchev's attempt at de-Stalinization was the publication in 1962 of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and the emergence of its author as a major figure on the world literary scene. So explosive was Solzhenitsyn's short novel about life in the Gulag deemed to be by the editors of *Novy Mir*, which first published it, that they artfully contrived to have its publication personally approved in advance by Khrushchev himself, thus circumventing the censors, and the book did indeed cause the expected sensation when it appeared. Overnight the name of Solzhenitsyn became the most exalted in Soviet literature—praised, amazingly, in the official organs of the Communist party and everywhere hailed as marking a turning point in the Soviet regime itself. Yet less than three years later the KGB had launched its campaign to suppress Solzhenitsyn's work and stifle its author, and the process was begun that led first to the expulsion from the Writers' Union and then to the enforced deportation from the country itself of the writer—by now a Nobel laureate—so recently saluted in *Izvestia* as "a true helper of the party in a sacred and vital cause." Even before Solzhenitsyn was forced into exile, the further publication of his writings—which has meant the publication of all his major works—was prohibited in the Soviet Union. This prohibition remains in effect today.

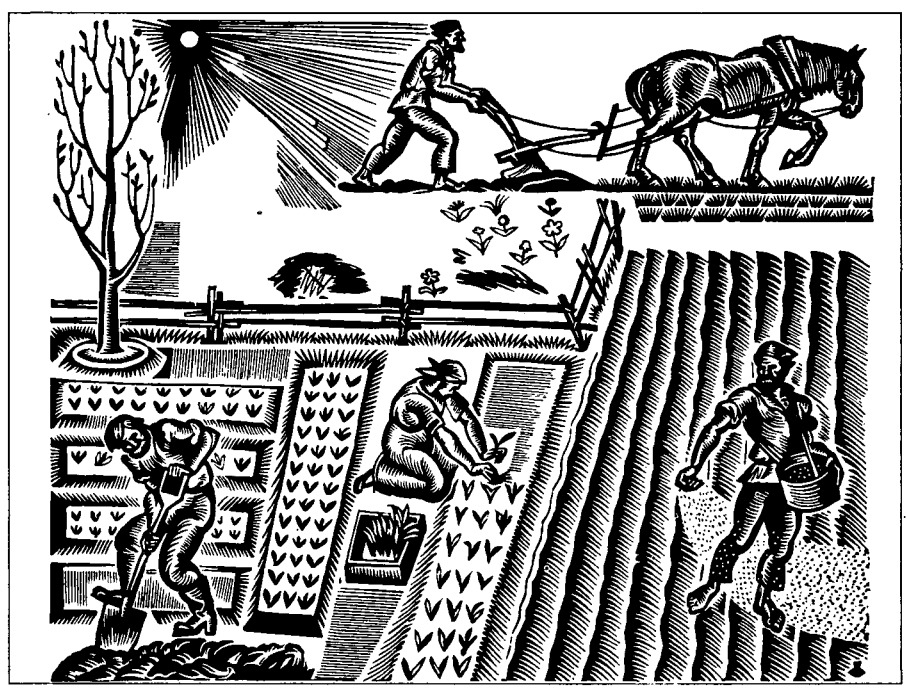
It is in the light of this history that Anatoli Rybakov's novel, *Children of the Arbat*, needs first of all to be understood, for it was in the period of Khrushchev's thaw, with its heady but ambiguous promise of de-Stalinization, that this book was first conceived; and it is entirely to the pre-Solzhenitsyn, Socialist Realist conventions of Soviet fiction that it really belongs. Its "innovations," if they can be called that, lie in the book's political line, not in the way its characters or their story are imagined. In the immediate aftermath of *Ivan Denisovich*, it must have seemed to many a loyal member of the Writers' Union that the party line on literature had shifted at least to the extent of allowing for a few discreet horror stories about the Stalin era so long as they were told in a manner that questioned nothing fundamental about the system that had produced the horrors in the first place. It was in this spirit—which, even at this low threshold of expectation, soon proved to be unduly optimistic—that Rybakov set about the task of writing a popular novel, set in the early 1930s, that would be critical of Stalin while at the same time meeting the needs of the current party line.

Which is to say, a novel that condemned Stalin's character and policies, documented some of the less bloodcurdling injustices suffered by loyal party members at his hands, and acknowledged the atmosphere of fear, coercion, and terror that he perfected, while nonetheless affirming the proposition that the Revolution itself remained just and glorious and that true believers in the Leninist ideal remained pillars of virtue and models of Soviet manhood and womanhood no matter what adversities they were obliged to endure as the result of the tyrant's malign power.

As we know, Rybakov was in a perfect position to produce such a novel. Like the book's putative hero, Sasha Pankratov, the young Komsomol member who is in every respect a figure of virtue but who is nonetheless arrested on false charges at the onset of the Stalinist terror and sent to Siberia, Rybakov suffered a similar fate in his youth—he is now 77—and was subsequently "rehabilitated." He had become a popular writer of children's books and was presumably a Communist in good standing when he started writing what is, in effect, a fictional chronicle—one is tempted to say, *fictional* in every sense—of his own generation, the generation whose youth was blighted by the wholesale arrests and purges and executions of the thirties. *Children of the Arbat* may thus be said to have been conceived as a double vindication—a vindication, first of all, of Rybakov himself and those of his own generation who believed in the Revolution and who suffered from what is now to be understood as Stalin's ghastly betrayal of it; but a vindication, too, of true Communism, which it is one of the novel's functions to distinguish from the monstrous mockery that Stalin is claimed to have turned it into.

To accomplish this double purpose, Rybakov turned to the genre of the two-tiered historical novel that had long been accepted by the party bureaucrats as the form most suitable to the large-scale—or "epic," as they say—depiction of Soviet life. Hence on one level the narrative recounts the ordeals of the good Sasha and his friends and family and enemies, while on another, interwoven with this story of their personal lives and their political fate, we are given some vivid glimpses of Stalin himself as he goes about the cold-blooded task of arranging for Kirov's assassination, the event that served as a pretext for what historians now call the Great Terror. In keeping with the strict conventions of Socialist Realist fiction, none of the characters in this novel—neither the invented ones like Sasha and his friends nor the historical figures like Stalin and Kirov—are anything but one-dimensional. As we would expect from a professional writer of children's tales, Rybakov proves to be a skillful storyteller, but he is incapable—as much, one suspects, for ideological as for literary reasons—of creating credible characters. Sasha himself is simply too good—both as a man and as a Communist—to be true, and so, for that matter, is Kirov. As for the women, both young and old, they are straight from central casting.

Even so—and despite its formulaic celebration of Lenin as the all-wise



Hilton Kramer is editor of the New Criterion *and author of* The Revenge of the Philistines.

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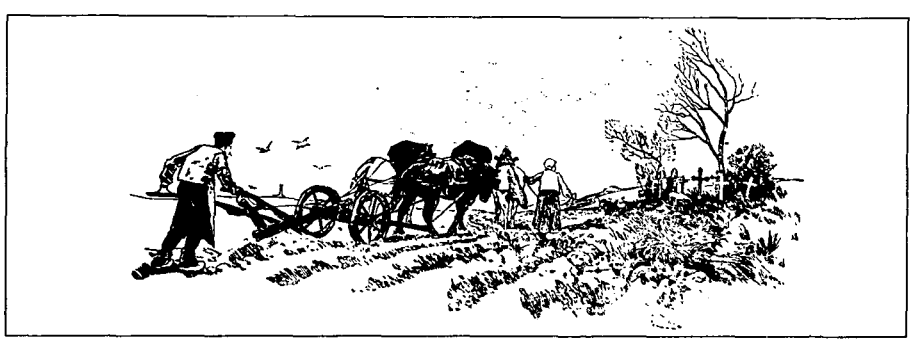
leader of the Revolution that Stalin was now said to have betrayed through "bureaucratic perversion"—*Children of the Arbat* could not be published when it was completed in 1966. Khrushchev had been removed from power two years earlier, and even before it had succeeded in bringing about his downfall the Politburo had clearly lost its taste for de-Stalinization. In fact, the all but impossible task of rehabilitating Stalin himself, rather than his victims, was now given priority. A novel that depicted Stalin as the evil betrayer of Lenin's glorious Revolution obviously didn't stand much of a chance. Twice over the years *Children of the Arbat* was announced for publication, first by *Novy Mir* and then by *Oktyabr*, but then withdrawn as the Kremlin wrestled with the problem of the proper line to be followed in depicting the past. It had to wait for Gorbachev and the policies of glasnost and perestroika for the novel to be published, and the immense success that it has enjoyed in the Soviet Union since its appearance last year certainly does tell us something important about the way the Gorbachev regime differs from its predecessors—but not, perhaps, exactly what we have been told it tells us.

The novel's portrait of Stalin, for example, though candid by the standards of the Brezhnev era, is tepid stuff compared to other accounts that have already been given to us by Soviet writers who have displayed a stronger stomach for the truth than Anatoli Rybakov; and so, too, with his description of the dawn of the Stalinist era. Next to the figure who emerges from Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko's *The Time of Stalin*—to cite one of the less famous examples—Rybakov's portrait is almost a valentine. (It was Antonov-Ovseyenko's father Vladimir who led the Bolshevik storming of the Winter Palace in 1917. He was executed in the thirties, and Anton himself spent many years in Stalin's Gulag. *The Time of Stalin* was published here in 1981. It should be better known than it is.) And compared to Lydia Chukovskaya's novel, *The Deserted House*, or to the two volumes of Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs, *Hope Against Hope* and *Hope Abandoned*, Rybakov's account of his characters' response to Stalinism is the sheerest political kitsch.

Children of the Arbat is no better, either, as literary sociology. One notes, among much else, the almost complete absence of any reference to anti-Semitism in this book. From a reading of the novel, you would have to believe that the Jews in the Soviet Union were more or less unaffected by the political developments it recounts. Jews hardly exist in this book, and considering the milieu that many of its characters are drawn from—the Arbat section of Moscow is well known for its cosmopolitan or "bohemian" character—their absence amounts to something akin to self-censorship.

But it is, above all, in its sentimentalization of Lenin and the myth of the Revolution that *Children of the Arbat* underscores not only the limits of Rybakov's literary imagination and political perspective but the meaning of its current success—both here and in the Soviet Union. The truth is, this novel, which pretends to face some of the harshest realities of Soviet history, leaves every fundamental question about the Revolution—Lenin's Revolution—unexamined. To the extent that it deals with Lenin at all, it simply and mendaciously invokes the all-too-familiar benign icon of Soviet mythology. Yet that icon is essential to the novel's portrait of Stalin, for it allows Rybakov to make of Stalin a kind of scapegoat for the Revolution while questioning nothing important about the Revolution itself. It allows him, in other words, to write not only about Stalin but about the Revolution and the Leninist ideal in a way that is palatable to the party and its traditions. By concentrating its criticism on Stalin, *Children of the Arbat* absolves itself from having to deal with the system that made Stalin—and that much larger phenomenon, Stalinism—possible and inevitable. Which is another way of saying that it absolves itself from having to deal with Leninism. It is in this sense, perhaps, that there is probably some truth to the claim that *Children of the Arbat* truly represents the spirit of glasnost and perestroika.

As for what the novel means to Soviet literature, it serves only to remind us that the great hope that dawned with the publication of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* more than a quarter of a century ago remains to be fulfilled. □



THANK GOD FOR THE ATOM BOMB AND OTHER ESSAYS
Paul Fussell/Summit Books/$17.95

Thomas Mallon

Paul Fussell's growing readership looks to him for news of three territories he has made very much his own during the last dozen years: war, travel, and status. Books like *The Great War and Modern Memory*, *Abroad*, and *Class* have displayed a happy regression in literary-career terms. Professor Fussell, respected scholar of eighteenth-century literature at Rutgers and, more recently, Penn, has become a cultural and moral commentator of considerable reach: he is more like Swift and Burke and Johnson now than when he was writing books about them.

Having become famous for a book on the First World War, Fussell has lately been turning more and more of his attention to the Second—a war that was bad for literature, because it lacked the distinguishing thing of the First: irony. "The high-minded loquacity of all those poets of the Great War! Entirely a different scene from the style of the Second War, which is silence—silence ranging from the embarrassed to the sullen." From Vietnam, fought in a "postverbal age," one must expect even less: "how is it that we know ('for certain,' it's tempting to add) that no weighty, sustained poems, or even short poems of distinction, are going to come out of it? . . . Is it perhaps that we secretly recognize that real poetry is, as Hazlitt called it, 'right royal,' aristocratic in essence, and thus unlikely to arise from the untutored or the merely street-smart?"

If some of what Fussell has to say about travel seems a little obvious this time out, he does offer the useful coinage *touristees*, for "South Sea islanders, the lifetime junk-dwellers of Hong Kong, the villagers of India, the young women of China who spend their lives making tiny stitches on horrible embroidered pictures to sell to tourists. *Touristees* are the geeks of the contemporary world . . ." In any case, the postverbal age is also, he tells us, a post-touristic one: we no longer expect to acquire wisdom from travel, just as the deconstructionists tell us we shouldn't look for it in literature.

Fussell is fond of Linnaean classification, even when it comes to offering an anatomy, as it were, of nudism: "Nude, older people look younger, especially when very tan, and younger people look even younger—almost like infants, some of them. In addition fat people look far less offensive naked than clothed . . . the eye is repulsed much less than in normal vacation life by those hideous 'resort' clothes." Turning his slightly embarrassed eye from highly formal cavorters on the Adriatic to spectators at the Indianapolis 500, he finds three social classes:

> the middles, who on race day, in homage to the checkered flag, tend to dress all in black and white and who sit in the reserved seats; the high proles, who watch standing or lolling in the infield, especially at the turns, "where the action is"; and the uglies, the overadvertised, black-leathered, beer-sodden, pot-headed occupiers of that muddy stretch of ground in the infield at the first turn known as the Snake Pit.

Even though the aphoristic and allusive Fussell has something wise to say on nearly every page ("It's amazing the way a bikini, even if both top and bottom are present, looks grossly obscene in a nude context, nastily coy and flirtatious"), *Thank God for the Atom Bomb* is probably not as varied and stimulating as his previous gathering of essays, *The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations*. Readers may find him straining a bit in ones like "On the Persistence of Pastoral": "It is curious that as a venue of pleasure and relaxation, a place from which you return 'refreshed,' the beach began to be popular only when the demise of formal literary pastoral had taken place." I would say such things as automobiles and Robert Moses are more to the point here. I would also, as the recognized leader in American scholarship on the British poet Edmund Blunden (up to now a non-competitive sport), take issue with Fussell's description of Blunden's "unabashed patriotism." Blunden was abashed about roughly everything, including national identities. But Fussell is absolutely right in reasoning that Blunden's chief disqualification as a "modernist" is a fondness for people. (Surely no one has offered George Or-

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Thomas Mallon is the author of A Book of One's Own: People and Their Diaries, *and, most recently,* Arts and Sciences, *a novel.*

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well a higher compliment than this one from Fussell: "It's impossible to imagine him being interested in Wallace Stevens.")

For Fussell, one's values as man and writer are not to be separated. Orwell, too, found those things forever joined: "As [Orwell] sees it, there are two moral defects which issue in bad writing: one is laziness, the other pretentiousness." Like most good poems, most good essays usually end up being inquiries into the powers and limits of language itself. Whether writing about nudism, chivalry, or auto racing, Fussell finds that diction unlocks mindset:

> In their enthusiasm to forward a noble cause in a suspicious, nasty-minded world, naturists have been vigorous devisers of euphemism. *Naturist* has by now virtually ousted *nudist*, which itself could be supposed a sort of euphemism for *nakedist*. Lest the idea of a *naturist beach* seem too jolting to the conventional, naturists have come up with *free beach*, or *clothing*-or-*swimsuit-optional beach*. *Sunbathing* is popular as a disarming synonym for *nudism*, and among the cognoscenti no elbow nudge is needed to suggest how it differs from *sunning*, which is what you do with a bathing suit on.

On poetic diction a year after Gallipoli: "Even though the war had been going on for two years and three months, to sentimentalists and Tories one still did not carry a rifle, one *bore arms*. The enemy was still *the host*, the battle *the tumult*, and actions *deeds*, rendered variously as *valiant*, *gallant*, or *noble*." Even the Indianapolis 500 is "a language event" full of name-branded garb: "A person unable to read . . . would get very little out of Indy." Like Orwell—in fact, as a nice subtle touch within his essay on Orwell—Fussell can make his discriminating language even more precise by numbering his points.

Language, however polluted, is the only river on which truth can ride, and honest men will face up, unselectively, to each definition and dependent clause—even the one the National Rifle Association leaves off its inscription of the Second Amendment on the facade of its offices on Rhode Island Avenue in Washington: "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state . . ." Fussell sends the whole NRA a Swiftian draft notice. Surely they can close-read their own amendment if he, wounded veteran, can do that to his own decoration: "The American Purple Heart Medal still says 'For Military Merit' on its obverse, although one earns it not for any action or decision but for having one's body accidentally penetrated by foreign objects."

The really superb essay in this volume is the title one, "Thank God for the Atom Bomb," which is finally not so much about the bomb, or even war, as it is about ambivalence—the honest ability to live uncomfortably in moral shades of gray. Though in the foreword Fussell oversells the controversial nature of this collection, this essay is genuinely worthy of that adjective.

In the spring of 1945, Fussell "was a twenty-one-year-old second lieutenant of infantry leading a rifle platoon. Although still officially fit for combat, in the German war [he] had already been wounded in the back and the leg badly enough to be adjudged, after the war, 40 percent disabled." Being still "officially fit" meant that he could figure on being part of the imminent invasion of Japan, which was expected to last a full year and incur one million American casualties from the "universal national kamikaze" being prepared to meet it. That noted military tactician John Kenneth Galbraith is typical of appalled retro-moralists in thinking the bomb was unnecessary: The Japanese would have surrendered in "two or three weeks." But as Fussell points out:

> At the time with no indication that surrender was on the way, the kamikazes were sinking American vessels, the *Indianapolis*

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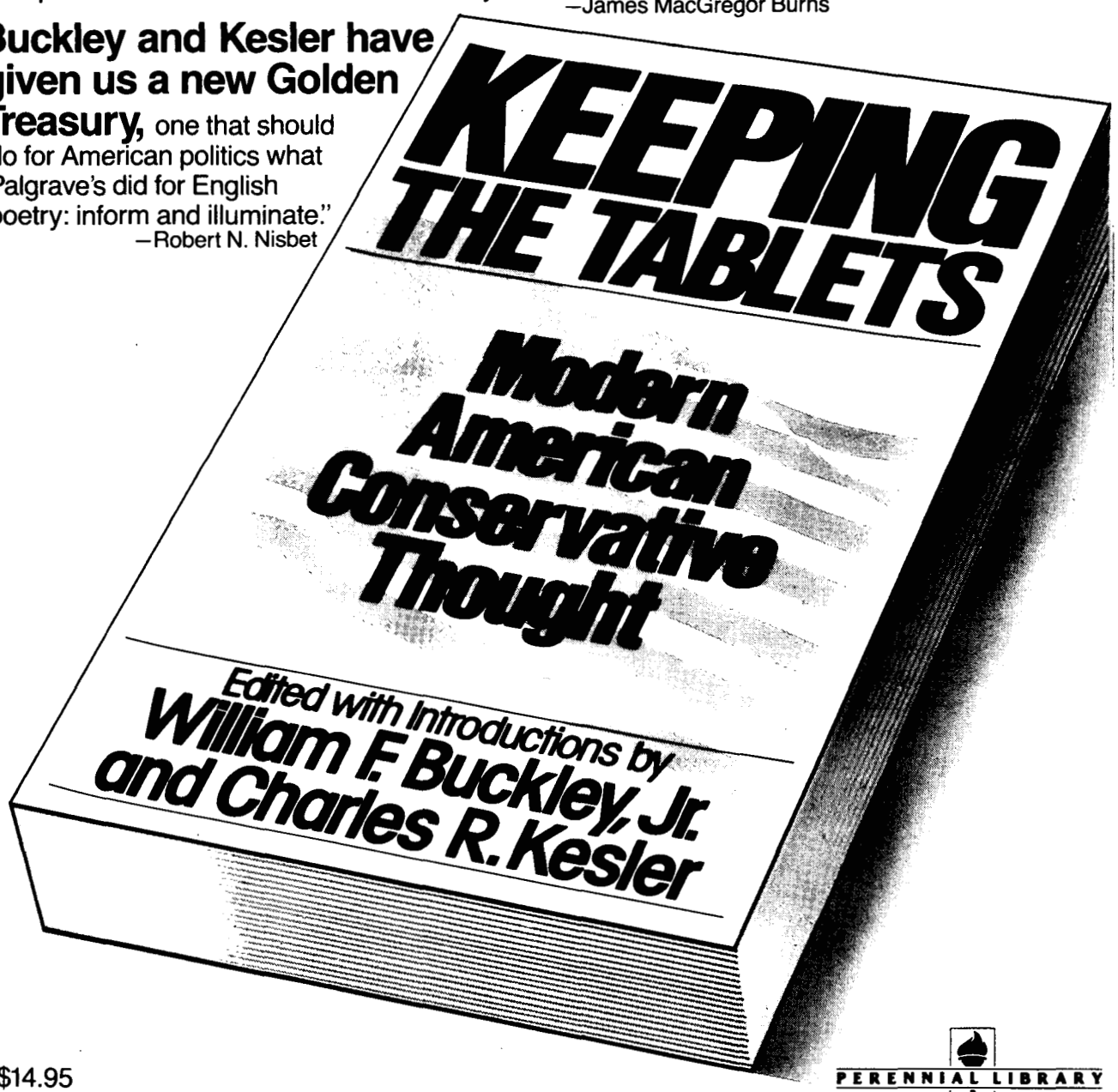

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was sunk (880 men killed), and Allied casualties were running to over 7,000 per week. "Two or three weeks," says Galbraith. Two weeks more means 14,000 more killed and wounded, three weeks more, 21,000. Those weeks mean the world if you're one of those thousands or related to one of them.

The New York Review of Books asks, "Was the Hiroshima Bomb Necessary?" when it should, Fussell says, be asking, "Was It Effective?" Nowhere in the essay does he lose sight of his own life-and-death self-interest in the matter; he refuses to pretend he isn't grateful for something that probably saved his life. (At this point I have to thank God for the college draft deferments that let me sit out Vietnam reading Keats, and now let me spend this Sunday afternoon fifteen or twenty years later writing this essay before getting up to the fridge for a Rolling Rock. Unlike the atomic bomb, which can be debated strategically, draft deferments seem now, as we knew they were then, incontrovertibly immoral. I like to think I would have voted against them in a referendum—but I suspect I wouldn't have.)

The dropping of the bomb was, Fussell contends, "a vast historical tragedy," but not a disaster—since tragedies have two sides and disasters only one. In the book's most useful aphorism, he declares: "Understanding the past requires pretending that you don't know the present." Fussell is talking about the remove of forty years, but the law applies equally to a remove of forty seconds, the time it may take to realize that what you thought was an F-14 was really an airbus. The only thing morally relevant is that forty seconds ago you thought it was an F-14.

Paul Fussell's sensibleness (as opposed to "sensitivity," in its present corrupt usage) amounts to a sort of sensibility—shaped by his study of writers like Johnson and Orwell; his imaginative reconstruction of the First World War, and his direct experience of the Second. Our only light amidst the snares is language, and we must shine it constantly. Foolish critics will describe Fussell as a "curmudgeon," which is all wrong, since curmudgeons just occupy the opposite end of the spectrum from those calling themselves "sensitive": neither group thinks; each just twitches. Fussell belongs to that small intelligent group in the middle who believe that the only real courtesy you can pay your fellow man is to use your brains.

We all live on the moral seashore, the waterline of right and wrong shifting and disappearing with each new tide of events. The only way to keep any sort of responsible footing is to pay attention to the disagreeable details of the events themselves. How well I remember discussions with my liberal academic colleagues several years ago about intermediate-range nuclear missiles. I took the position that the only way we'd get rid of Soviet weapons of this kind (something that didn't preoccupy them much anyway) was for the Western countries resolutely to deploy their own intermediate-range weapons. Then maybe both would be negotiated away. You remember: build up to build down. My colleagues' reaction to this argument was to label it grotesque, following that with all the usual sensitive stuff about "enough weapons to kill everyone fifty times over," etc., etc. The only word that made them smile, like children in from the rain, was "freeze." Of course, if we'd gotten a freeze then, what we'd have now is a Europe with Soviet missiles, as opposed to the far more missile-less Europe we're about to see. But what I most remember, and what's relevant here, is my colleagues' unwillingness to look at facts. No, let me change that word, since each side in any argument tends to use "facts" when it means "outlooks." What they would not look at was *information*. They did not care to acquaint themselves with the names of these missiles, their particular destructive capacities, their location, and the like—boning up on such stuff was, remember, grotesque. They preferred the cultivation of their own finer feelings to such study, and retreated with their nonnuclear umbrellas further up the moral beach, where the sand is never wet.

I suspect that Paul Fussell would actually have been opposed to the position I took on these missiles, but I want, presumptuously, to claim him as a kind of ally because of his statement that war "requires choices among crazinesses." In fact, one could say the same for most instances of human behavior. That he looks closely enough to do the choosing is his true claim to be that much devalued thing, a critic. These days, at least in academic precincts, critic usually means hermeneutical snake-oil salesman. Fussell can be proud of living up to the definition the word could be said to have had from Johnson's time through, roughly, Orwell's: Critic—an on-the-spot moral philosopher. □

THE POET AUDEN: A PERSONAL MEMOIR
A. L. Rowse/Weidenfeld & Nicolson/$14.95

James W. Tuttleton

A. L. Rowse's memoir of his long and complicated friendship with the poet Wystan Hugh Auden is one of the liveliest—and crustiest—books to be published this year. Rowse was a senior classmate of Auden (1907-1973) at Christ Church, Oxford, in the mid-1920s. After that their lives took sharply different turns. Rowse stayed on at All Souls as a don and lived a studious life, publishing over the years a number of books on Shakespeare and the sonnets as well as biographies of Marlow, Milton, Swift, and Arnold. Auden, after graduation, went down to London, where he made his mark as a poet, and from there went on to America, where he was lionized in the forties and fifties. Later, Auden temporarily settled in Austria and finally returned in old age to Oxford, where Rowse in the last years took him under his wing.

During Auden's far wandering, Rowse kept up with Auden's poetry; the two were often in touch by letter, and their paths crossed many times in foreign countries. The memoir is thus very well informed and extremely personal. Brash, brusque, and irreverent, full of snap judgments and sharp insights, *The Poet Auden* is neither a biography nor a work of literary criticism. What Rowse has tried to do here is "to sleuth him in his work," to give an account of how the poet's life figures directly in the poems. Frequently Rowse reproduces his marginalia as, book by book, Auden's volumes appeared; he then comments on his youthful responses from the curmudgeonly vantage of old age. At the same time, the memoir provides Rowse an opportunity to pay off some old scores that, in tactlessness and sheer infelicity of phrasing, will simply leave the reader agape.

To understand this memoir several facts about A. L. Rowse must be kept in mind. As a student at Oxford, Rowse (who came from working-class origins) succeeded, against great odds and despite great prejudice, by innate merit and hard work. He became a youthful Marxist trained in history, a no-nonsense empiricist, and a passionate Labour party advocate (and failed party candidate). After the collapse in the thirties of his youthful left-wing political dream, he, like Burckhardt, retired to scholarship and—knowing firsthand about working-class squalor—developed what can only be called the aristocratic attitudes of the conservative don. Looking back, Rowse therefore has no sympathy whatsoever for the indiscipline, self-indulgence, and lack of scholarship in the middle-class Auden (and his left-wing circle), who played at revolution and ventilated in poetry their seamy homosexual affairs. This circle included "the sainted *guru*, E. M. Forster, moral mentor of them all," who is described as a "milksop"; Stephen Spender, who "had a genuinely lyrical early gift, which petered out as he became a literary figure"; "the imitative Day Lewis"; "the promiscuous Cambridge Apostle Guy Burgess"; and Christopher Isherwood—of whom Rowse remarks that he regards "the overestimation of him by all the media as gross and absurd."

On the subject of "the prime question in Wystan's life"—Auden's openly avowed homosexuality—Rowse remarks that, as a young don, he was early on propositioned by Auden but, in typically English fashion, was saved by an Oxford bell: " 'Four o'clock,' I said, 'I'm always in the Common Room at All Souls for tea at four,' and got away." Rowse claims to contemplate Auden's inversion from the point of view espoused by Bishop Butler: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be: why should we seek to be deceived." However, Rowse is far from neutral about Auden's private affairs, as reflected in the poetry. He notes that, in declining Auden's proposition, "an invisible line" had been drawn between himself and the poet and his friends. And it is clear that, whatever may be the complexities of human sexuality, Rowse found these people looking for love in all the wrong places.

In particular, Rowse is critical of the Auden group for glorifying Berlin in the twenties and thirties. They liked Germany because homosexuality was openly condoned there and handsome Nordic catamites were easily purchased for the night. He finds nothing of aes-

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thetic merit in these Auden poems that cracked private homosexual jokes for the initiated—for example, "He's marvellous/He's Greek/When I see him/My legs go weak." Or the dedication of Auden's first volume *Poems* to Isherwood: "Let us honour if we can/The vertical man/Though we value none/But the horizontal one." Both Auden and Isherwood were "really rather anti-academic," Rowse remarks, "—perhaps understandably, after they had done so badly at and by the university. Isherwood hated Cambridge—fancy anybody hating so beautiful a place, young ass!" Apropos of their German fixation, Rowse writes:

> I thought that French discipline, the classic standards of French literature and art, the clarity of the language, were just what Auden-Spender-Isherwood needed. Instead of that they went for horrible German Expressionismus, the indiscipline of the Weimar Republic, the unspeakable vulgarity of Berlin. Think of it, opting for Berlin as against Paris!

Auden, however, was resolutely anti-French: "Their famous *clarté*," he once remarked, "is thicker than the thickest *Wiener* treacle."

Furthermore, Rowse cannot forgive the Auden circle for mixing up their homosexual predilections with left-wing politics. In the late twenties and thirties, most of them had "no practical common sense, let alone political sense," and in his view, their camp rhapsodies over the handsome working-class boys and the coming revolution erotically idealized the class from which Rowse had escaped and trivialized the political process as well. Instead of recognizing the rising Nazi menace and the need for a unified Britain under the Labour party, according to Rowse, they went Communist and merely played with the idea of revolution, trying to shock the English bourgeoisie.

In his political poems in *The Dance of Death* (1933), Auden announced that "The English revolution/is the only solution/We take a resolution/to follow thee." And C. Day Lewis came out with inanities like: "Revolution, revolution/Is the one correct solution—/We've found it and we know it's bound to win." Rowse tried to discourage Spender from joining the Communist party, believing that only the left agenda of the Labour party could save England, but he was unsuccessful. They were, Rowse argues, "middle-class rebels, in revolt against their class upbringing. This made a great difference between them and me. . . . I observed them from the sidelines. Actually, *they* were on the sidelines; I was in the thick of the Labour Movement, an active Party candidate all through that hopeless decade."

In fact, Auden did throw himself into the Communist cause when the Spanish Civil War broke out, the *Daily Worker* exclaiming that "the most famous of the younger English poets and a leading figure in the anti-Fascist movement" was going to Spain to "serve as an ambulance driver." But Auden really "saw very little of the war, and spent most of it in hotels in Barcelona and Valencia . . ." And of Auden's postmortem in "A Communist to Others," Rowse can only remark "what *naiveté*!—their only excuse that they were young and didn't know what they were playing with."

With the end of the thirties—that "low dishonest decade," as Auden called it—the poet went to America, disillusioned with the failure of his poetry to inspire class revolution or to avert world war. He oracularly declared that "poetry makes nothing happen" and that "the political history of the world would have been the same if not a poem had been written, not a picture painted nor a bar of music composed." "We must love one another," he warned ominously, "or die." That one of the most *engagé* poets of the thirties should have turned his back on revolutionary Communist politics, abandoned his British friends, and exiled himself to America stunned the British literary establishment.

No psychoanalyst, Rowse nevertheless partly accounts for these changes in the poet's life through Auden's relationship to his mother, who died in 1941. The poet—"the Fortunate One/The Happy-Go-Lucky, the spoilt Third Son," underwent in that year "a great personal crisis" and—like an emigrating Eliot in reverse—Auden converted to Christianity. He became ostentatiously religious and poetically espoused—in works like *For the Time Being* (1944) and *Nones* (1951)—a Christianity fated to be superficial, unconvincing, and temporary. At this time he also began a lifelong relationship with the promiscuous and unfaithful Chester Kallman, vacationed at Fire Island, the summer hangout of New York City homosexuals ("this outpost where nothing is wicked/But to be sorry or sick," where "The Love that rules the sun and stars/Permits what He forbids"), and bemoaned his loneliness.

Auden's private life in New York, which was the common stuff of Oxford gossip, leads the puritanical Rowse to ruminate: "I found it a little odd that committed Christians, like Wystan and his [Oxford] tutor Nevill Coghill, did not allow that to inhibit their sexual pleasures." Although the lifestyle of Auden and his friends was degraded, Rowse remarks, "I do not condemn the Auden circle, but I preferred the sedate way of life, the lifestyle of Eliot, sad as that was (and so was mine)." In any case, Auden was no Eliot, and the Christian phase was nominal at best.

In America during the war, Auden was lionized by his students at Swarthmore and celebrated by American critics. He became an American citizen in 1946, remarking superficially that "the attractiveness of America to a writer . . . is its openness and lack of tradition. It's the only country where you feel there's no ruling class. There's just a lot of people." Rowse speculates that the openness of America appealed to Auden because he was essentially a middle-class misfit, fundamentally rootless, with an intellectual culture "wide rather than deep, discursive, ranging over the surface rather than sinking shafts into rich ground." For Rowse, Auden during this period "was spoiled by the Americans," with the effect that "prose came to dominate—no crime—but it was a pity that there was so much of it in Auden's verse." Still, he is not inclined to agree with the poet Philip Larkin, who claimed that Auden's move to America produced a poet whose later work holds "the reader's attention only sporadically if at all."

Rowse is convinced of Auden's genius and has high praise for his virtuoso technique in all of the poetic forms from the most exalted down to the limerick and the clerihew. But even though he protests Larkin's conclusion that Auden "ended up a pompous 'windbag,' " Rowse makes it clear that he also finds Auden's inflated verse full of the plainly nonsensical, the oracular, and the fatuously sententious. Rowse's Auden is a rhetorician of willed attitudes, exiguous inspiration, and little passion or heart. Having tracked Auden the man in his work, Rowse concludes by asking, "How much of it gives pleasure? I must honestly say, not much—chiefly the shorter poems, not much of the longer." This judgment seems just about right. □

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THE MASK OF COMMAND
John Keegan/Viking/$18.95

Seth Cropsey

Does the West have a problem making war, and if so, what is it? Are we too fierce, spoiling for the clatter of advancing armored columns, or do we love peace excessively? In the last dozen years the British author John Keegan, formerly senior military instructor at the Royal Military Academy and now defense correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, has written two popular books that implicitly answer those questions. We are, he thinks, ignorant of battlefield realities and even more dangerously—now that we are armed with nuclear weapons—prisoner to such ancient ideas as heroism.

Published in 1976, Keegan's *The Face of Battle* aimed "to tackle again the concept of the 'battle piece' . . . into which [combat description] has been set for so long by custom and unreflective imitation." True, the blind Homer bristles with spear after ash-shafted spear that penetrate bronze helmets, slicing through bone and brain to hurl young men twitching into the dust. But Keegan focuses on later literature of war, which is, to him, all too tersely mechanical, and silent on how it really seems to those who fight.

Through Keegan's eyes, Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme are as graphically riveting as one could imagine without a TV reporter—whose camera Keegan's pen surpasses. Agincourt was fought the morning of October 25, 1415. Keegan describes the freshly plowed fields wetted by recent rainfall; the shivering lines of troops laced into their armor, and, suffering from diarrhea, unable to relieve themselves as they stood in place waiting for action. Lightly armed English archers group in twos and threes, picking off heavier French men-at-arms with an ax stroke here, a hammer blow there, and a death-dealing stab through the visor slits or the soft points of body armor. Waterloo is just as gory: dehydration, shock, loss of blood, and musket fire that tore flesh without knocking men off their feet. The trenches of the Somme numerically foreshadow Bergen-Belsen and Treblinka: along the twenty-mile front in Picardy, the British suffered 21,000 dead *in the first hour* of their assault of German lines in July 1916—almost four times the number of Marines killed in the extremely bloody three-week struggle for Iwo Jima.

On the whole, Keegan's course tracks with Jonathan Schell's: The political and strategic reasons for wars occupy a distant, if at all visible, station behind the immediate bodily suffering of combat. Unlike Schell, however, Keegan's chief interest is not in pushing policy, either foolish or wise. Instead, in his most recent book, *The Mask of Command*, he argues that the course of history has inexorably driven us to the sticking point: humanity itself must transform or die.

Cleverly, then, Keegan praises the Strategic Defense Initiative: it is a protective measure at a moment when human nature must change its aggressiveness to something less toothy. The thought that we can blow ourselves to smithereens is not new; neither is the notion that something's got to give or else. Keegan's angle is that the technology of war has shifted the demands of political and military leadership so that once-heroic qualities such as risk-taking, initiative, and rhetoric are today's recipe for global cinders.

Mask contains one essay each on four men who wore differing "masks" of command: Alexander, Wellington, Grant, and Hitler. Keegan's Alexander represents the hero. Throwing his army at the center of the Persian line in an opposed crossing of the river Granicus, he dismounts to command the attack himself. When frustrated by his engineers' failure to reduce the double-walled Indian city of Multan, Alexander leads a small group over the rampart, and, momentarily isolated, takes an arrow to the lung. The king is smart as well as brave. Alexander rejects staff advice to engage the Persian fleet that threatens his lines of communication with home, and chooses instead to lay waste enemy naval bases on Asia Minor's west coast—an example of a naval power's vulnerability to the loss of bases which applies no less today than it did 2300 years ago.

The reader is asked to suppose that nothing good came of this. Alexander's empire collapsed and his successors consumed the remains. Keegan thus glides, as befits a liberal Briton, over the possibility that the Hellenic imperialism Alexander brought into Egypt, Asia Minor, and India was better than the despotic rule of Darius and his Persian line. Absent also is the idea that Alexander's extension of Greek language, culture, and administration paved the way for other men and systems that would imitate his ambitions at universalism. "His dreadful legacy," laments Keegan, "was to ennoble savagery in the name of glory and to leave a model of command that far too many men of ambition sought to act out in the centuries to come."

A contrasting model, the Duke of Wellington, faced many of the problems of command at Waterloo that Alexander did at Granicus and Gaugemela. Because leadership demanded it, and because there was no other way to understand events soon enough to affect them, both men risked close proximity to action. The two commanders depended alike on animal-drawn transportation once their logistical lines crossed the beach from the sea. And combat machinery had neither radically increased killing power, nor altered the distance at which opposing armies could engage one another.

But something had changed. Armies had enlarged since antiquity, and in Keegan's opinion, shrunken political liberties had tipped the scales in favor of command at the expense of leadership. More important, the modern state had evolved into an impassioned, demanding taskmaster. In the historically determined world of *Mask*, Wellington's mechanical submission to duty is a nail in the casket of ancient glory. As a result, history's answer to the book's arch question—whether to lead from the front—turned from the path Alexander took.

People's wars and popular government stifle heroic virtue, too.

Seth Cropsey is deputy undersecretary of the Navy.

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This isn't news, and there needs no author come from the *Daily Telegraph* to tell us that Ulysses Grant mirrors the American regime, but Keegan does anyway. Grant chews his cigar, takes a nip or two, and puts down the rebellion. Keegan approves: the great captain exposed himself to hostile fire to see and be seen; he treated civilian authority with the respect it constitutionally deserves; and, Keegan says—overlooking Grant's later election to the presidency—his countrymen were, wisely, not over-impressed. (To Keegan it is good news when a people can resist the temptation to fuss over hero or war chief, a tendency "rooted in the subconscious of . . . traditional societies.")

Keegan reserves his highest praise for Wellington and Grant's willingness to risk danger in order to *see* the tactical situation, *listen* for the hints volleying gunfire could offer, and learn *firsthand* what was actually happening. He praises in others the ability to *sense* battle, a thing he happens to excel at describing—the rolling eye of a terrified horse, the sound of a thousand armored knights clinking across a muddy wash, the stench of decay on a littered battlefield. As supreme commander, Hitler never experienced these things. "He, deluded by the apparent instantaneities of the radio, telex and telephone . . . believed that he saw with the immediacy of the men on the spot." Indeed, one of the book's themes is its blistering attack on today's military reformers who yearn for a system of general staff officers protected from operational necessities so they can ponder great (and small) military questions unsullied by the corrosive influence of reality.

In one sense, Hitler did grasp that reality, seeing that combat on land had become nearly as mobile and quick-moving as war at sea. But he never knew how to conduct its day-to-day operations. And once he assumed command of the Wehrmacht, where he could not see the actualities or be seen by his soldiers, he had no use for a "mask of command" at all. Keegan sketches a man as ill-equipped to command as a web is to hold water: obsessed with idiosyncratic notions of honor, wed to the mindset of a war fought in his youth, contemptuous of those who had not, as he had, suffered wounds in that war, unable to delegate authority, ill-served by a tiny cluster of obsequious cronies, capricious, and powerfully adept at creating an atmosphere among his subordinates of paranoia and mistrust.

With Hitler dead and burned Keegan concludes. Today's leaders never see the front at all; in fact, nuclear powers take elaborate steps to shield top people from the physical consequences of their ultimate orders. What then is the basis of their leadership? Keegan dismisses the obvious answer—the consent of the governed in free nations, and the sheer force of tyrannical rule elsewhere—because modern leaders like Truman, Nixon, and Carter still *try* to invoke their own personal experiences under arms "to heighten their military authority."

These invocations appear to Keegan to support shared risk as the true foundation of legitimate political authority. And in Keegan's shadowy world, where leaders do not share our risk, yet remain possessed of a vestigial desire for heroic virtue—and where voters can sometimes be irrational—democracies with nuclear weapons need a spiritual overhaul. They need "POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP."(What we may hope for from totalitarian regimes is not explained.) In the final pages of *Mask*, this means correcting democracy to replace passion with reason.

That democracies can act irrationally is a truth that has been known for almost as long as we've known that a superior practical system is hard to find. Keegan steers clear of proclaiming one. But even his modest proposal would throttle the patient. Taking passion out of politics equals getting rid of politics. Keegan commits the usual mistake of utopians: half a loaf will not do.

A recent Alexander addressed the practical question of *reducing* passions in politics: the great objective of Hamilton and the other Founders. Even by Keegan's standards, there shouldn't be cause to complain about the result. Today, the world hasn't gone to nuclear war, and probably won't. Popular will, as expressed in treaties, new protective defenses, and advances in conventional explosives and delivery systems, points the way to a future in which combatants, noncombatants, and nuclear freeze proponents alike can once again look forward to being killed by nonnuclear weapons.

In fact, the wars of the past forty years—smaller, regional, and unconventional—are likely to be the wars of the next forty. It defies common sense and the facts to think that popular passion, inflamed by the Macedonian Alexander's example, eggs us on to fight in these smaller conflicts. Indeed, judging from the West's moral and editorial tussles with global responsibility, the warfighting spirit of even our most eloquent leaders is far from dominant in making policy. Popular passions are much less dangerous than the aggressiveness of our ambitious, unaccountable opponents. In this sense, it is truly unfortunate that Mr. Keegan is wrong. Our problem is defending, not restraining, our democracy. □

THE ELECTRIC WINDMILL:
AN INADVERTENT AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Tom Bethell/Regnery Gateway/$17.95

William McGurn

It was in Rome that I first met Tom Bethell the reporter, the spring of 1983 to be exact. As assistant managing editor for *TAS*, I had long dealt with his columns, typed on yellow foolscap with neat little notes and emendations written in the margins, and many was the evening I had trudged down to the Bloomington Post Office to coax a reluctant mail clerk to take just another look in the pile of Express Mail for a certain letter from Washington. But I hadn't actually met Tom until a USIA junket sent us both to Europe on the same trip.

Our first stop was Rome, and, on the third day, after Fortune had intervened to cancel a scheduled meeting and thus provide us with a free afternoon, Tom and I strolled along the Via Veneto on our way to St. John Lateran. We were trying to figure out how to make use of our unexpected free time, and Tom mentioned a holy man who lived about an hour's bus ride from Rome who was supposed to bear the stigmata, the wounds of Christ. Tom had been there the day before and described it to me: the smell of flowers, what the pious call the "odor of sanctity," had been overpowering.

Overpowered myself by Tom's en-

William McGurn is deputy editorial page editor of the Asian Wall Street Journal.

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thusiasm, two hours later I found myself on the bus to San Vittorino to see Brother Gino with Tom. We arrived in time for the Mass, during which Brother Gino sat on the altar, stone-faced. There was no fragrance. Afterward we went around to a back room where Gino—a stern-looking fellow almost the exact opposite of the tender-hearted Francis of Zefferelli's *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*—eventually came in and blessed rosary beads and suchlike. I remember one woman holding up jugs of water. Still no fragrance. We then went up to him one by one, where we kissed his hand and received a small picture of Our Lady of Fatima in return. As I did so, I picked up just the whisper of a sweet scent from his bandaged hand, only for the briefest of moments.

Outside Tom discussed the dramatic difference with the day before. A priest came up to us and asked if we wanted to go back inside. Tom went back in, where Gino, still unsmiling, apparently gave him a short sermon the gist of which was not to waste his time writing about San Vittorino (Tom wrote it up anyway for the *National Catholic Register*) but to tell people to stick to the straight and narrow. We returned to Rome, and, eventually, to our respective homes.

A month later, Tom called me from Washington to ask if I would track down some plant that he thought had the same scent, a green plant with white flowers whose name I forget. He was writing his piece and wanted detail. An hour after the call I was at the Bloomington nursery bending down at dozens of green flowering plants, to the great amusement of a number of ungodly Hoosier gardeners.

What impressed me about our foray was not Gino but Tom. The follow-up phone call was typical: Tom noticed *everything*. More to the point, he sifts through his observations so that every detail tells. Unlike those graduates of creative writing courses whose essays are tedious piles of adjectives, Tom knows how to sum up the whole by presenting just the right part; without having ever been there, you know just what the East Wing of the National Gallery is like, for example, when Tom notes that "the main museum space is perfect for cocktail parties." Clinical in scope, the Bethell eye is that of an enthusiast undeadened by routine. As he explains in his just-published book, *The Electric Windmill: An Inadvertent Autobiography*, even ignorance can be a blessing:

> The journalist turns his own unfamiliarity with a subject to advantage. He is able to transmit to the reader the pleasure of discovery, of understanding something for the first time, in a way that is nearly impossible for someone who has been studying a subject for years. How often have we met the expert who cannot explain his field because he can't recall the mental state of not understanding it.

It doesn't hurt to have Tom's sense of irony, either.

In the first chapter of *The Electric Windmill*, "I Was a Wishy-Washy Liberal," Tom recounts his arrival in the American Colonies on August 28, 1962, fresh from Cambridge (the real one). Like others who have found the egalitarian Americans enchanted by a British accent, Tom reports how from the first he started making innumerable and ill-informed criticisms of virtually everything he saw, all to the remarkable approval of his hosts. He remembers thinking at the time that no Frenchman or Englishman would ever put up with that sort of thing himself.

The *kind* of criticism that was so readily accepted is equally revealing, for Tom was in fact rather apolitical at the time. "If pressed," he writes, "I would have described myself as a liberal, and in conversation I would have sounded like one. The point is that, although I knew nothing about politics or government or economics, I did know which political responses were considered in good taste and which were offensive to polite society: which evoked a murmur of assent and which elicited looks of worried reappraisal." Exactly. And this critical perception that the politics of the left is less a matter of politics than of propriety is what has made Tom's columns so effective. He's the guy who puts his finger on something we all know is wrong but can't quite express why.

What saved Tom was jazz. Even before he came to America he was a jazz buff, and the subject and its practitioners form a disproportionate share of this book; one of the few times Tom gives himself up to a tender moment is his account of being asked by Punch Miller to pick up a trumpet and join in. Certainly there is an affinity between jazz and American conservatism, both rooted in the public, and Tom occasionally—all too rarely—takes up that theme, or indeed music at all. More important for our purposes here, jazz got Tom out of New York and Washington and into America. Naturally, he was drawn to New Orleans, where he first started writing regularly, for the *Vieux Carre Courier*.

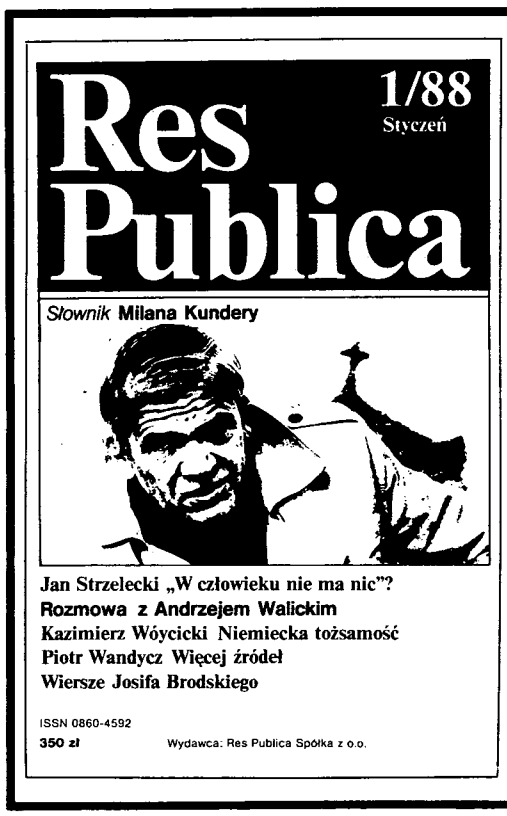
He reports that at first he was surprised to find out that the writers who scribbled so authoritatively every day were not authorities who'd spent years in study, but he seems to have caught on quickly. One of the more amusing asides deals with a *Financial Times* reporter whom Tom met while he (Tom) was a New Orleans–based stringer (regular, nonsalaried contributor) for that paper. The *FT*'s Washington editor rang Tom up to ask if he could help out a reporter passing through looking for an angle on a series about the South:

> Happy to, I said, and then sat down to think up a new wrinkle on the "New South" theme. I realized this was getting iffy from the *FT*'s point of view. There had been at least three stories on the subject in the paper. One said how much things had changed, another said how little they had changed—both written by me. Then the Washington editor himself put in an appearance and deftly produced a third story compatible with the first two—quite a feat. Now a fourth was needed. I worried that the remaining interpretations open to us were becoming distinctly limited.

In the event Number Four duly arrived, girlfriend in tow (heightening Tom's suspicions about the real nature of the trip), and over oysters and beer they discussed the story angle. Number Four was unpersuaded by Tom's argument that "the South" no longer existed as a single, homogenous entity; he was firmly committed to the Old-South-is-still-with-us angle. "Of course," he conceded, "I imagine you could find whatever story you want if you set out to look for it."

Far from putting new faces on old clichés, the stories Tom includes here exhibit an impressive variety and concomitant grasp of the huge differences within America itself—regional, cultural, and economic—that Americans often forget and foreigners never recognize in the first place. In addition to jazz, politics, and the New South, *The Electric Windmill* includes pieces on a New Orleans real estate mogul, condom week at Stanford University, a district attorney with whom Tom worked to try to find out who "really" murdered JFK, evolution, professional faster and nuisance Mitch Snyder, longshoreman-philosopher Eric Hoffer, and a Manhattan hospice for AIDS victims run by Mother Teresa's Sisters of Charity. The title itself is taken from Tom's visit to a 1979 technology fair, where he gravitated toward a wind-powered generator built with the help of a $150,000 grant from the Community Services Administration. Looking it over, Tom noticed that the propellers were moving even though there was no breeze, and an inquiry revealed that the windmill was in fact plugged into a power outlet. Again Tom's finger pointed out that the emperor was without clothes. "It wasn't demonstrating the production of electricity," he writes. "Electricity was demonstrating it."

Yet in contrast to the outraged tone of run-of-the-mill muckrakers, Tom has something of an admiration for the audacity of it all, perhaps feeling that in an odd sort of way the windmill did indeed reflect the "old-fashioned American ingenuity" it was supposed to celebrate. Throughout the pages of *The Electric Windmill* they parade by, frauds, zealots, pests, hypocrites, and, on occasion, the genuine visionary. Though the portraits Tom draws are bitingly accurate, for all but the sanctimonious there is nonetheless something loving about the brushstrokes, especially when Tom stumbles across an honest-to-god nut. Reading it through, one suspects it might even force a smile from the good Brother Gino. □



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THE DEATH OF METHUSELAH AND OTHER STORIES

Isaac Bashevis Singer/Farrar, Straus & Giroux/$17.95

Donna Rifkind

In Isaac Bashevis Singer's world, things are seldom what they seem. His stories are full of people who are constantly being deceived: men by women, women by men, men by promises of wealth or of a delusory earthly Paradise after revolution. The story that launched Singer's considerable fame in this country, "Gimpel the Fool"—published in *Partisan Review* in 1953, in a translation by Saul Bellow—tells of a simpleton who spends his whole life being tricked for the amusement of his townspeople. Preparing to die, he says of the next world: "Whatever may be there, it will be real, without complication, without ridicule, without deception. God be praised: there even Gimpel cannot be deceived." This is thought by many to be one of Singer's best stories, and is probably his most famous.

The storyteller himself is no stranger to deception. His fictional technique is extremely cunning, full of tricks and traps and escape hatches. Often he will appear to be following dutifully in the tradition of Sholem Aleichem and his other Yiddish forebears, only to veer off wildly in his own direction, as if to remind us that his is the only Yiddish voice most literate Americans recognize. Irving Howe once wrote of Singer that "though a master of Yiddish prose, he has cut himself off from the norms and styles of Yiddish culture, simultaneously moving backward to a pre-Enlightenment sensibility and forward to modernism."

While one could argue that Singer is about as much of a modernist as Geoffrey Chaucer, Howe's statement points to the capricious quality that is to me the most interesting aspect of his writing, and which is evident throughout *The Death of Methuselah*, his most recent collection of stories. In this volume Singer is by turns blasphemous and reverent, here comic, there tragic, first spiteful, then gentle. Dichotomies are set up like an elaborate slalom course through which characters are forced to maneuver, between the sacred and the profane, faith and doubt, love and hate, asceticism and hedonism, miracles and ordinary life. In "The Smuggler," a visitor tells the author, "You once wrote that human nature is such that one cannot do anything in a straight line. You always have to maneuver between the powers of wickedness and madness. . . . One must always steal one's way among those who have the power and carry weapons."

This visitor's story is one of exile—the story of all Singer's Jews. Escapees from the malignities of Hitler and Stalin, unwelcome city dwellers in Warsaw, or emigres from dirt-poor *shtetls*: none of the survivors here can claim ever to have had a true home. As the visitor boasts, "My body is my contraband. My coming here to America in 1949 was, I may say, a triumph of my smuggling." One of the collection's comic stories, "Sabbath in Gehenna," is set in hell, the ultimate exile. Even here, the damned are struggling to maneuver better conditions and fewer tortures for themselves.

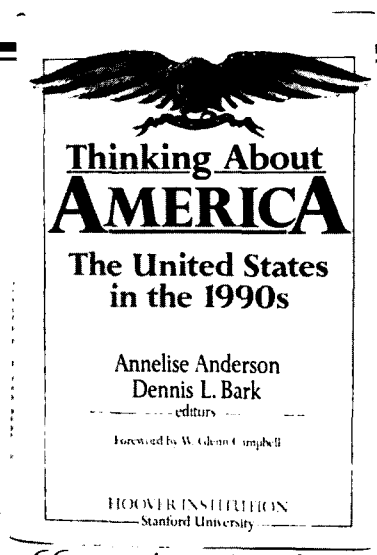
Many of the tales in *The Death of Methuselah* share Singer's most familiar premise: a traveler tells another person (frequently an author who may or may not be I. B. Singer) about an amazing episode in his life—usually one which reveals that things are not what they seem. In "The Impresario," a former deserter from the Austrian army in World War I, now a professor in Rio de Janeiro, tells a Singer-like Yiddish writer the story of his marriage to a promiscuous singer in the Yiddish opera. "I knew that to live with this woman would be permanent hell for me," he tells the writer. "I swore a holy oath to get rid of her once and for all. Two weeks later, we got married."

Before long, to the professor's horror (which begins to feel strangely akin to delight), a Polish charlatan, an "impresario," moves in with him and his wife, and soon is even sleeping in their bed with them. The professor, who was once a believer in free will, now claims that "man has no more freedom than a bedbug"; he is no longer able to distinguish between what he wants and what he dreads. Bewildered, he tells the author that for him "pleasure is a form of suffering."

In "Runners to Nowhere," a Warsaw feuilletonist relates the following bleak tale of Hitler's bombing of Warsaw. A crowd of Jews is running from the bombs toward Bialystok, then under Stalinist occupation. The best runner among them is a Trotskyite poet named Bentze, of whom it is said that he "would have had a better chance to remain alive among the Nazis in Warsaw than in Bialystok among his former comrades." As he runs, he makes a shameless attempt to re-affiliate himself with the Stalinists running near him, as well as to court a married woman. When they reach Bialystok, the Stalinists begin an inquisition of Yiddish writers, and those who are not killed are then forced to run again when the Nazis invade in June of 1941. The feuilletonist remarks, "Hundreds of thousands such as Bentze were exiled to a sure death, all in the name of a better morning and a beautiful future." This story outlines the boundaries of an existence from which even the most vulgar opportunist is unable to escape; not only is any sign of goodness here conspicuous by its absence, but corruption too is utterly beside the point.

Singer's most remarkable achievement in this collection is his title story. It is a fable about a biblical character, the grandfather of Noah, but it manages to incorporate many themes of the more mundane tales in this volume. Methuselah, 969 years old, is at last near death. A woman he had once desired named Naamah, who is now a demon, persuades him to go with her to hell, which she claims is the true Paradise, where Satan is the true God. In hell "they called life death and death life. For them right was wrong and wrong right." "He could not tell the difference anymore between laughter and crying, the cheering of female demons and the wild cries of male hobgoblins." Methuselah barely manages to escape from this mirror of confusion, which he comes to understand is a vision of the future. The next morning he is found dead, having realized that, from now on, "Man would manage somehow to crawl upon the surface of the earth, forward

Donna Rifkind is assistant managing editor of the New Criterion.



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and backward, until God's covenant with him ended and man's name in the book of life was erased forever."

For Singer, man's earthly scourge is his readiness to be deceived into not distinguishing between wrong and right. No matter how guilefully his characters operate, all are susceptible to this torment, and for some it signals their destruction. A willingness to believe seems always to be accompanied by a willingness to be deceived. The author himself is able to escape this trap—if only temporarily—by telling tales, an act whereby he is able to become for a tiny moment like God, the prime maneuverer.

Singer's own maneuverings have produced a collection that is quite uneven; four or five of the tales are rather trivial, such as "The Missing Line" and "Gifts," and one, "The Jew from Babylon," is unnecessarily obscure. Certainly none of the stories approaches the lucid elegance of "Gimpel the Fool." But Singer once again proves himself to be a most interesting contradiction: in some ways defiant of the Yiddish tradition to which he is an heir, he still manages to echo key sentiments from that tradition—sentiments that show to what extent the inevitability of deception has always been on the minds of religious Jews. They are dark sentiments, fostered by dark times, and can be summed up in this quotation from Ecclesiastes: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for that is the whole of man." □

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 7)

Eugene H. Methvin replies:

Far from implying that Talmadge was an accomplice to Klan violence, I stated it plainly, I thought. Lest anyone have doubt, I so say now. Call Professor Winchell's own witness, the late *Atlanta Constitution* Editor Ralph McGill. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his steaming columns after some Kluxer-types bombed a synagogue in Atlanta in October 1958. Quoth McGill: "The state's political leadership has been of the sort which has created a climate of incitement to fanatics and extremist persons, many of whom are neurotic to the point of mental instability. The record on that is clear. . . . For a long time now it has been needful for all Americans to stand up and be counted on the side of law and the due process of law—even when to do so goes against personal beliefs and emotions. It is late. But there is yet time." Talmadge was Georgia's foremost political leader in those days, and the foremost denouncer of the Supreme Court and inciter of "massive resistance." His mild January 1959 Senate law-and-order speech came on the heels of *years* of silence in the face of lynchings, beatings, night-riding, and blistering editorials such as McGill's, and was in effect a plea of guilty to the charge of complicity with the Kluxers. We don't need to wait a hundred years to pass judgment on such leadership.

If Mark Royden Winchell truly believes "much" of Georgia's progress over the past forty years is the result of Talmadge's six-year governorship, he undoubtedly also thinks the rooster's crowing makes the sun rise. With so preposterous a collaborator, Senator Talmadge must be forgiven much of the folly of his "memoirs." One can have some sympathy for an aging politician looking back, but what does one do with an accomplice college professor who claims to have done research on his own and still joins such a historical flummox?

Thatcher Basher

Maurice Cranston has obviously lived too long in an ivory tower. His article "Margaret the Magnificent" (*TAS*, April 1988) could only have been written by a Thatcherite academic with little or no experience of what mere mortals call "the real world." As a British citizen currently residing in the U.S., I feel compelled to reply to some of his more wayward observations with a few of my own.

One of the first things we were taught in history lessons was never to speculate, yet Mr. Cranston's assertion that "things would be very much worse if she had not come to power" is a lynchpin in his argument. Where does he get his crystal ball, and can the rest of us have one, too? It is all very well to criticize James Callaghan for failing to rescue an ailing economy, but has Thatcher really done any better? Economic growth is measured in jobs, standards of living, and industrial output. It is not about bits of paper whizzing about the floor of the Stock Exchange. Last year's crash testified to the flimsiness of such an economy and showed how little effect such business has on the man in the street. In all there are about four million people out of work in Britain through no fault of their own. It makes no difference to them whether stockbrokers are making a fast buck or plunging from the twentieth floor: real economic growth is visible, whatever the academics try to tell us.

Mr. Cranston also makes much of Mrs. Thatcher's "moral quality . . . courage." Since when has it been courageous for one of the most powerful armed forces to take on a tinpot junta and win? Banning the import of corned beef would have had the same effect as a full-scale military operation against Argentina, but the prime minister wanted to show that we were still A Force To Be Reckoned With. As for the poor men who so needlessly suffered in the conflict (not "war"), they were not allowed to attend the victory parades for fear of deflating Thatcher's already hollow victory. Let us not ignore the fact that the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands were on the verge of becoming third-class citizens with few if any rights as British subjects when the conflict began. Since then their status has been upgraded again to justify the colossal expense of maintaining "Fortress Falklands."

To describe Mrs. Thatcher as a "formidable champion of liberty" is a statement likely to provoke the anger of much of the population of Northern Ireland where, as I remember, a state of martial law exists. Britain also has the worst history of human rights violations in the European court, and consistently refuses to act upon the court's rulings.

Early in his piece, Mr. Cranston refers to "the British Constitution." Surely he needs no reminding that no such thing exists? It is the very absence of a written constitution that has enabled this government to ride roughshod over those who might be a potential embarrassment to it. The banning of books and the seizure of tapes from the BBC should not be permitted in civilized society, yet Mrs. Thatcher can get away with it because there is no specific law against such action. The very reason that journalists continue to fight such cases is to show that the existing secrecy laws are anything but honest and decent, and that they must be changed. As the prime minister will not agree to a written constitution, she must expect law reformers to attack from wherever they can.

As for Britain being a "democracy," the facts speak for themselves. Nonpayment of the new poll tax by the poor will inevitably deny them the right to vote, rendering a sizable portion of the population non-existent in the eyes of the state. This is certainly a "return to Victorian values"—disenfranchisement on a massive scale. And as for the first-past-the-post electoral system, it is an outmoded travesty of democracy. If a party can be elected into office on less than 35 percent of the vote, there has to be something wrong with the system. Yet the prime minister will be the last to change it: it works all right for her. Is this honest? Is this a show of her legendary strength? Britain is the only European country not to have proportional representation, an unsatisfactory state of affairs in a three-party state.

There can be no doubt that the present government has spent more than ever before on the National Health Service. But this has not been reflected in the quality of treatment accorded to its patients. Instead, all the extra cash has gone to bolster up an unwieldy bureaucracy—to pay more administrators while wards close and waiting lists lengthen. The social services have recently suffered massive cutbacks that make the needy even needier than before. The government's constant restructuring and juggling of figures to disguise the truth would imply that things are a lot worse at the bottom of the heap than they are prepared to admit. This is hardly honest or caring.

So, what has Mrs. Thatcher really achieved? Mr. Cranston's article gives us the answer. She has without doubt made the rich richer and the poor poorer. She has eliminated her opponents in the cabinet and replaced them with spineless yes-men. She has sold off the nationalized industries to create an infinitesimal reduction in taxes. She has extended police powers and used them for political ends (such as raiding the BBC). She has banned books and newspaper articles to protect her own. She has emerged clean as a whistle from one political scandal after another while those around her fell. She has lied to Parliament (over the sinking of the *Belgrano*).

If a nation should look to its leader for (to paraphrase Mr. Cranston) "honesty . . . industry . . . justice . . . " etc., then I think it should look somewhere else. And if he seriously believes that, once the all powerful state has been established it will quietly withdraw to allow Britain to run itself, he should know that power-crazed egotists never quit.

Mrs. Thatcher has generated hatred amongst her detractors and a kind of loyalty amongst her followers which borders upon the fanatical. There is little middle ground for reason or objectivity. And those of us who attempt to remain objective find it harder by the day as we read the ever increasing mountain of propaganda singing the praises of one of the most dangerous people ever to set foot in Britain. Let us hope that it is not too late for those supposedly intelligent individuals to see reason, and to put the government of the country firmly in the hands of those who wish to serve the country, not to own it.

—Neil Charles
Carmel, Indiana

Maurice Cranston replies:

Mr. Neil Charles's letter confirms at least one of his own assertions, that Mrs. Thatcher has "generated hatred amongst her detractors . . . that borders on the fanatical." I (who am not a Conservative) attempted a measured appraisal of her achievements; Mr. Charles attacks her immoderately.

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Mr. Charles also violates a rule he lays down. We must not speculate (he says) by suggesting that things might have been different from what they have been, yet he goes on to speculate that Mrs. Thatcher could have got the Argentinian army out of the Falklands "by banning the import of corned beef." Dare I say that a man who believes that will believe anything?

Some of Mr. Charles's criticisms of British government policy are fair enough. There is still too much bureaucracy, but pre-Thatcher governments set it up and entrenched it, and Mrs. Thatcher has done something to diminish its power. There is too much interference with the press, but the opposition is demanding more curbs on the press (to protect the right to privacy, etc.). The fact is that a large part of the British press (as of the American) is more irresponsible today than it was in the past, and no party wants to allow it a gentleman's freedom if its owners are not gentlemen enough to know how to use it. I would agree with Mr. Charles that proportional representation is needed in England to ensure majority rule, but Mr. Kinnock's Labour party is even more resolutely opposed to its introduction than is Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative party.

"A" for Efron

Rare indeed, not to say exhilarating, is a review like that by Edith Efron of Paul Weaver's *The Suicidal Corporation* (*TAS*, June 1988). She not only takes care of the matter at hand, the book under examination, but illuminates with her not-so-gentle irony some of the pertinent economic, political, ideological, and linguistic controversies currently in play among our various civil sects.

The devices of corporatism should not be news to those who remember the work of Gerdner and Means in the thirties, or the studies of Adolf A. Berle, the corporation lawyer-diplomat-FDR Brain Truster.

Now, as we watch the manic-depressive behavior of the Stock Market and seek a prognosis for the Trade Deficit, we are said to be experiencing an "information explosion." But in the debate over its implications we are confronted with the Biblical reminder that words can be multiplied without knowledge. And Laò Tzu said: "Abandon learning and there will be no sorrow."

This seems to be the essence of the dilemma that Miss Efron posits as she draws a line and dares "conservatives" to cross over and receive the blessings of self-criticism. Also at heart is the diminishing presence of the ethical factor in socio-economic relations. Are values to be only financial? Is "free enterprise" anything more than social Darwinism?

While the Golden Calf is being worshipped by some in the business pages of newspapers, and the Ten Commandments are being handed down in the editorial pages, Miss Efron makes the distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* that de Gaulle was fond of doing, and chooses the reality of fact and the fact of reality.

At any rate, she certainly has parsed the book she was reading. Perhaps she should now write one of her own, placing "primacy on the culture over the economics." I'd like to read it.

—Alexander Kendrick
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

In Pursuit of Knowledge

In the May 1988 issue of *The American Spectator*, Chester E. Finn, Jr. argues [in "The Social Studies Debacle] that social studies educators are biased against the transmission of knowledge as an educational goal. To substantiate this claim, Mr. Finn provides a few carefully selected examples, among them a reference to what he calls "another influential NCSS statement adopted in 1983." The reference is to a publication entitled "In Search of a Scope and Sequence for Social Studies," a report of a task force that I chaired.

Your readers may be interested in knowing a bit more about what that document actually has to say about the place of knowledge in the social studies curriculum. In the fourth sentence following Mr. Finn's excerpt, the NCSS document states:

> The knowledge base provides facts, concepts, and generalizations that help students understand human affairs and the human condition. Knowledge provides a basis for values and beliefs, and it is the vehicle for the development of skills.
>
> In spite of modern technology—or perhaps because of it—*the ordinary citizen has an enormous need for knowledge that is useful in making informed decisions.* [Italics added.] Information gained in the classroom should be helpful in understanding events and conditions in the world outside of school.

On the page preceding the one from which Mr. Finn draws his citation, the same document says this:

> Social studies has historically had a special responsibility for the attainment of such educational goals having to do with knowledge of the American heritage, the economic system, law and government, political processes, the history and geography of the world, world cultures, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and the principles and ideals of American democracy.

It is hard to understand how a fair-minded person could read the document and conclude that the transmission of knowledge is not an important goal of social studies. Throughout the statement, there are numerous references to the importance of knowledge and the need for the citizen to be informed about subject matter from history and the social sciences. Mr. Finn incorrectly states that the document identifies the *main objective* of social studies to be "to prepare young people to identify, understand, and work to solve the problems that face our increasingly diverse nation and interdependent world." The NCSS statement says simply that such is "a responsibility of social studies programs."

It is clear that Mr. Finn distorted what he had to say about this NCSS statement in order to serve his own purposes. This causes me to wonder how much credibility can be given to the rest of what he has to say about NAEP results and other matters discussed in the article.

—John Jarolimek
Bothell, Washington

Chester E. Finn, Jr. replies:

The 1983 "scope and sequence for social studies" statement that Mr. Jarolimek and his colleagues prepared indeed recognizes "knowledge" as a legitimate educational goal. It even says that "programs that combine the acquisition of knowledge and skills with the application of democratic values to life through social participation present an ideal balance in social studies."

I note in passing that "application of democratic values to life through social participation" is a classic example of the sort of fuzzy gobbledygook that characterizes this field. But that isn't my central concern.

Naturally, it is better to include the transmission of knowledge among the goals of education than not to. I never suggested that the social studies establishment had banished it altogether. I merely said it is "in some peril," noting that in a 1981 document knowledge "was but one of five categories" and that in the 1983 document Mr. Jarolimek produced it was "not the overriding goal."

Well, it sure wasn't. Look at the relative weights. Knowledge was one of three major headings. Under it, Mr. Jarolimek's committee identified nine "important areas." Three of these were "history," "geography," and "government." (The others spanned a remarkable array from economic processes to dance, from criminal law to the "effects of natural and physical science on human relationships.")

In other words, what I take to be the proper knowledge transmission goals of social studies occupy roughly one-third of one-third of the "goals" espoused by Mr. Jarolimek's committee.

Need more be said?

Agnes Smedley Remembered

I have read your most interesting review by Harvey Klehr of the Agnes Smedley biography by the MacKinnons as well as the book (*TAS*, May 1988). Recalling my own acquaintance with Agnes Smedley as a fellow employee of a one-time Socialist daily newspaper in New York, the *Call*, I am inclined to accept Mr. Klehr's suspicion that the MacKinnons make far too much of her apparent non-affiliation with the Comintern.

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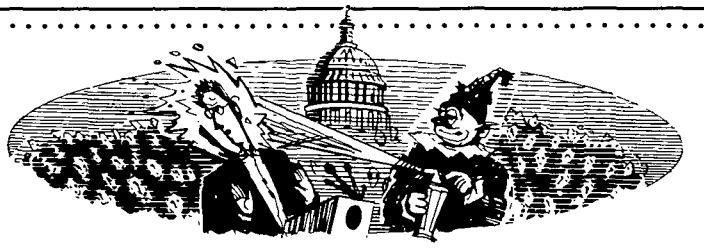

DIRTY HARRY AND THE WHISTLE-STOP CAPER

by Victor Gold

"I will not get down into the gutter with that fellow."
—Famous last campaign words: Thomas E. Dewey to Republican National Committee Chairman Hugh Scott, October 1948.

Like most of what passes for ultimate wisdom in the electronic news age, the Judgment of History is frequently out-to-lunch. Consider the legend of Give 'em Hell Harry Truman, spawned forty years ago this fall.

"The year 1948," writes Richard Norton Smith in his biography of Tom Dewey, "has come down to us as a series of myths, appealing images, and contemporary explanations of the pollsters' grievous misjudgment. On the one hand is the courageous bantamweight pursuing vindication on a lonely, hell-raising transcontinental tour; on the other, a rival caught up in the certainty of his triumph. . . . It was the tortoise and the hare . . ."

The legend is pervasive, to the extent that even Republican leaders, from Gerald Ford to current national committee chairman Frank Fahrenkopf, have tried to buy into the Truman image. Ford once compared Give 'em Hell Harry to Abe Lincoln in having reposed "great faith in the ultimate good sense of the people . . . and in 1948 they went to the polls and proved his faith fully justified."

That was vintage Jerry Ford in 1976, cheerfully pitching the memory of fellow Republican Dewey over the side in pandering pursuit of a few Democratic votes here, a few independent votes there; the same Jerry Ford who later that fall assured his countrymen that, contrary to rumor, "There is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe." A delegation of ethnics took him apart for that gaffe, but since the memory of Tom Dewey lacked vocal support from an irate voting bloc, Ford's degrading line about the 1948 Dewey-Truman race went unchallenged; as has Frank Fahrenkopf's recent Fordian slip to the effect that George Bush, trailing in the polls as of mid-summer 1988, is the spiritual descendant of Give 'em Hell Harry, who trailed in the polls forty years ago, yet won his race and emerged a folk hero.

One can only wonder about these Republicans, who speak reverently of the past but have no folk heroes of their own. Why else would Ronald Reagan quote not Theodore but Franklin Roosevelt at every turn and borrow his favorite metaphor—John Winthrop's "City on a Hill"—from John F. Kennedy? For eight years we've had FDR-cuddling and JFK-cozying in presidential rhetoric. Now, assuming that Fahrenkopf speaks for Bush and Bush's faith in "the ultimate good sense of the people" is justified on November 8, we face the prospect of a Republican President with a Truman fetish.

Clearly, the Give 'em Hell Harry legend is out of hand. For those too young to recall the Truman presidency—and to set the record straight after four decades of Democratic allegory—a few de-mythologizing points must be made, beginning with:

Myth No. 1: Truman the Lonely Campaigner. Trace this back to Irwin Ross's book, *The Loneliest Campaign.* No denying, Harry Truman was an embattled President in 1948, his party split three ways. On the left, he was flanked by Henry Wallace, running for President as an undiluted Soviet apologist on a third-party, "Progressive" line; on the right was the fourth-party "Dixiecrat" ticket, headed by then-Democrat J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Even centrist Democrats—including FDR's sons—were cool toward Truman. Their choice for Democratic standard-bearer was retired Army general Dwight Eisenhower (whose own party preference was still unknown). But Harry Truman a *lonely* campaigner? Anything but. He was a red-meat politician who understood the uses and trappings of presidential power, and the real story of the 1948 campaign was how that power, ruthlessly applied, overcame the cosmetics of modern political organization (Dewey was the master political organizer) and an unfavorable press (reporters didn't simply dislike Truman, they disdained him).

"Truman decided to employ the extended campaign tour by train as his principal campaign technique," writes Harold Gosnell in *Truman's Crises.* "This technique broke all precedents in American history. From the beginning it had been regarded as undignified for a president seeking re-election to take to the hustings . . . and [not until] 1912, when Taft was in political trouble, did a president make a few speeches. Truman was the first president to make an extensive tour."

There were three campaign whistle-stop tours, beginning in mid-September. The presidential entourage consisted of sixty-six personal aides and sixty reporters and photographers. Truman's train, originally built for President Roosevelt, was made up of sixteen cars and was called the *Ferdinand Magellan.* It was, to the eyes of one foreign observer, "an elaborate affair." Imperial would have been a better word. Truman, his wife and daughter aboard, occupied the rear car, a lavish tram with room enough for two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a sitting room, dining room, and kitchen. One tram up was the general dining car, connected to a suite of staff offices. Two cars up, a traveling newsroom; then came the Signal Corps cars; then the sleeping cars . . .

Some "lonely."

Myth No. 2: Truman, the Friend of the Working Man. Give 'em Hell Harry has also been represented as being "the little man's candidate," though nothing about the man, including his ego, was small. A pure product of Kansas City machine politics, he was an inner circle member of the U.S. Senate Club, the consummate Establishmentarian. Also the consummate statist, a lawmaker who never met a big government/big spending bill he didn't like. As President, he looked to government controls and when those failed, raw federal muscle, i.e., military takeover of plants and personnel, to solve all postwar economic problems. Faced with demands for higher wages by coal miners and the railway brotherhoods, Truman's hot-headed reaction was to request congressional authority to draft "all workers who are on strike against their government . . ."

Some "friend."

Myth No. 3: Truman, the President who made the Big Decisions under pressure. Such as, the Marshall Plan and military assistance to Greece and Turkey, which laid the groundwork for Western resistance to postwar Soviet expansion. Put those on the credit side, but in the debit column two incidents took place during the 1948 campaign that tell us something about Harry Truman's underlying naivete regarding Communist aims.

The first incident involved an unscripted presidential utterance in the summer of 1948. "I like old Joe," he told a crowd in Eugene, Oregon. "He is a decent fellow. But Joe is a prisoner of the Politburo." That's Joseph Stalin he was talking about, and it wasn't a slip of the lip but a reflection of Truman's world-view, as he demonstrated a few months later when—under attack from the Wallace left for being a warmonger—he worked up his own secret plan to end "old Joe's" Berlin blockade. A plan so secret he kept it from his Secretary of State.

Truman's brainchild—actually the brainchild of two young presidential speechwriters—was to pack Chief Justice Fred Vinson off to Moscow to make (as the President expressed it in his *Memoirs*) "an off-channel approach to Stalin" which "might expose the Russian dictator to a better understanding of our attitude as a people and our nation's peaceful aspirations for the whole world. . . . I had a feeling [wrote Truman] that Stalin might get over some of his own inhibitions if he were to talk with our own Chief Justice."

Right. And also a feeling that a

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headline-making detour around Secretary of State George Marshall—then involved in negotiations to condemn the Soviet blockade at the United Nations—might just wean some far left votes away from Henry Wallace in New York. Marshall, on hearing of Truman's plan, threatened to resign. Truman, who had asked for free radio time to announce the Vinson trip, scuttled the project, then blamed the press for leaking and undercutting his plan. Stalin, not having had the benefit of a heart-to-heart with Fred Vinson, went to his grave still plagued by "inhibitions." Too bad. One vodka-straight with the Chief Justice and good old Joe might have proclaimed glasnost forty years sooner.

Myth No. 4: Truman the Truthful. The President's 1948 whistle-stop tours covered some 32,000 miles and produced some 350 speeches, all focused on that "do-nothing, good-for-nothing 80th Congress" and various other manifestations of Republican depravity. But it was in Seattle, Washington, that Truman uttered the most memorable words of the campaign, after someone in the crowd (possibly planted by one of those sixty-six aides) called out, "Give 'em hell, Harry!"; to which, Truman replied: "I never give anybody hell. I just tell the truth on the Republicans and they think it's hell."

Indeed. Some samples for Jerry Ford's and Frank Fahrenkopf's scrapbooks. . . .

To an Irish-American audience in Boston: *"All this Republican talk about Communism is in the same pattern with their appeals to religious prejudice against Al Smith. . . . The Communists would like nothing better than to bring about my defeat and elect a Republican president."*

To a whistle-stop audience in Illinois: *"Powerful reactionary forces are silently undermining our democratic institutions. . . . My opponent is a front man for the same reactionary cliques that backed Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo."*

To a blue-collar audience in Gary, Indiana: *"The Republican party wants to establish an economic dictatorship, to move the capital from Washington to Wall Street. . . . If anybody in this country is friendly to the Communists it is the Republicans."*

And more: *"gluttons of privilege . . . predatory animals . . . bloodsuckers of Wall Street . . ."*

Writes Roy Jenkins, British Labourite MP, in his biography of Truman: "Everywhere he continued to berate the Republicans without much respect for restraint or even truth." And of Truman's Republican opponent, he adds: "Dewey behaved throughout the campaign with dignity and decency. . . . He was totally dedicated to being President, but at least equally dedicated to being a good one. He was uninterested in collecting cheap plaudits or scoring demagogic points along the way."

In short, he wouldn't get down into the gutter with that fellow. Too bad. Otherwise he might be remembered, forty years later, as a legend. Even a Republican folk hero. □

FERGUSON/ATLANTA
(continued from page 15)

is to keep the Democrats from forgetting who they are. Who are they responsible to? They're responsible to the people on this bus. Maybe Jackson can keep that in front of them. But I don't think that throwing pies is the way to go about doing that at this point in time."

In my mind, as he spoke, the fading pages of a college notebook fluttered open. At school, under the guidance of a Marxist history professor, I once labored with great seriousness and diligence over the works of the late Dr. Herbert Marcuse. Unfortunately, I now find, with an uneasiness familiar to most liberal arts majors, that all I remember from those weeks of eyestrain and mountains of note-taking is a single, two-word phrase. With Dr. Marcuse, of course, that phrase is "repressive tolerance." I was never sure of its meaning, and even in my most gullible moments I retained the suspicion that the aged Teuton was employing the tools of paradox and oxymoron to draw attention from the fact that his proposition was clearly untrue. My professor had dismissed my reservations by saying that someday Marcuse's work "would come alive for me." And suddenly it did.

Before boarding the bus, I had noticed that across from the undersized hall where the Democrats gathered to enhalo Governor Dukakis, officials of the City of Atlanta had cleared a large parking lot. On one side was a line of porta-potties, and, facing them from another side, stood a battalion of cops in riot gear. Smack in the middle, shadeless beneath a brutal sun, was an ample stage outfitted with a live mike and a Van Halen–like sound system, available to anyone with the nerve to use it. This was the "protest area," and throughout the week, morning and night, someone could be seen there, demanding the Democrats' attention before a crowd of a few reporters and whoever happened by. The cops stood around joking.

One could easily imagine Dr. Marcuse casting a knowing eye upon the scene, giving a slight tug to his beard, and smiling a wry smile: a textbook case of repressive tolerance. Dissent, taught the doctor, when it's a cooperative effort between The Man and the dissenting, is no dissent at all. And this is the way the Democrats have learned to control their truest selves: the enormous parking lot and the live mike for the aggrieved, the ceaseless praise of Jesse from the podium, and the dispensation of a plane and a bottomless purse, so the Rev. can campaign forever.

I mentioned this to the Yippie Pie Thrower of the Seventies, and he nodded agreement. "It's the steam valve analogy," he said. "You can let off steam to keep the whole thing from blowing up, but the Power Structure still keeps its hand on the valve, right? The Democrats know they can't treat people that way forever. We'll see how they do this week. Pretty soon the time may come when you've got to throw a few pies." He laughed what I at first took to be a portentous laugh, but within a few minutes he was asleep again. □

CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 47)

My own recollection is vivid, but not clear as to time. I was employed as a reporter, the youngest on the staff, from September of 1919 until I went down with the ship when the re-named *Call* ceased publication about 1924, except for a few leaves of absence. I do recall clearly that Agnes Smedley, whom I looked up to as an older, more sophisticated, and rather glamorous lady, quite flattered me one day by inviting me to be her guest at dinner at a nearby Child's. This was around the corner from our office at 112 Fourth Avenue.

Although unable to recall the date of that interesting dinner, the conversation that took place is unforgettable to me. She said that she assumed that since I was Jewish, I was probably preoccupied with the Russian Revolution. She added that she did not wish to belittle the Communist regime, but she felt that the future of the world would probably be decided in China, because of its vast population and the capacity for endurance of its people. She herself, she said, was determined to spend her life in China because she was certain that it was the best hope for world Communism. I thought she was recruiting me.

I must have shocked her by responding that I did not favor Communism anywhere and that I felt that the Bolsheviks had hijacked the real Russian Revolution. After that, she recalled that she was due back in the office and passed up dessert, although she did insist on paying the check.

I also recall that when I got back to the office, I was anxiously interrogated by a colleague a few years older than I, who knew Agnes Smedley much better than I did. He had introduced me to some of her Indian circle at a restaurant frequented by Indian self-exiles in New York, but he too was anti-Communist, but more on aesthetic than ideological grounds. I do not recall his first name, but if this Mr. Johnson is still with us (I am 86) I would welcome his recollections.

I also recall how astonished I was years later when I saw a picture of Gen. George Marshall with Agnes Smedley, who was referred to in the caption (*N.Y. Times*) as Marshall's advisor in his efforts to effect anti-Japanese unity in that country.

Whether or not Agnes Smedley was a Comintern operator may not be of substantial importance at this late date, but the answer might shed some light on the more general suspicion that some mere "fellow-travelers" were more effective and committed operators than the general run of dues-paying Communist members. The atmosphere at the *Call* office was not favorable to Communist infiltration, but there was some strange reluctance on the part of a few "liberals" to identify with the anti-Communism that prevailed among the staff and the editors.

There was one young woman, probably of Smedley's age, who openly leaned toward Communism. She was Dorothy Day, who later lived with Mike Gold of *Masses* fame. She later turned on Communism and founded the Catholic Worker movement, publishing its weekly newspaper. In the interval, while she was undergoing a self-liberation from her Communist ties, she wrote and edited a superb weekly Garden Page for the *Staten Island Advance* when I was its editor. She would not talk about Agnes Smedley, except to indicate a deep disapproval.

—Philip Hochstein
New York, New York

Cut It Out

I found your attempts at making the savage killing of a kitten and a parrot into foundations for humor offensive (The Continuing Crisis, *TAS*, July 1988). The things that men do to themselves and each other are sometimes humorous, as your column points out regularly each month. However, the cooking of live animals, whether in a conventional oven, a microwave or a crockpot, reveals only the sickness of the perpetrator of the act, and your treatment reveals only a lapse of your sensibilities.

Sometimes it is more appropriate not to be sardonic, and simply to state the facts and allow the reader to reflect on the kinds of behavior of which men are capable . . .

—Thomas L. Geer
Columbus, Ohio

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SPECIAL CURRENT WISDOM

JESSE JABBER

As a public service for those American sophisticates who so plangently have proclaimed the Rev. Jackson foremost of all the Republic's orators, we hereby present a choice selection of Jesse's jabber.

From a 1978 bull by the Rev. Jackson we glimpse the cranial chaos that has made him the Mussolini of American progressives:

We must fight for equity, ethics, and excellence because it is the only way that we can catch up and close the gap. Those of us who are behind must run faster because we are behind in a race for educational and economic equity and parity.

But we must close not only the quantitative gap but the qualitative gap as well.

We must close the gap with doctors, but doctors who are more concerned with public health than personal wealth.

Lawyers, but lawyers who are more concerned with justice than a judgeship.

Preachers, but preachers who will prophesy, not merely profiteer.

Journalists, but journalists who will ascribe, describe, and prescribe, not merely scribble.

Politicians, but politicians who seek to be of service, not merely seek an office.

Teachers, but teachers who will teach for life and not merely for a living.

Educators must believe in themselves, in their will, and in their skill to educate and administer effectively. We must believe in our children. Believe in our ability to teach them and their ability to learn.

We must believe that life is not accidental but providential, that it has meaning and purpose if we will but hold on and seek a new and brighter day.

Know that you are somebody, that you are God's child. For in the final analysis, we do not live by bread alone. We must know that unless God builds the house, they who labor, labor in vain.

We can teach our children—it is possible.

We ought to teach our children—it is our moral responsibility.

We must teach our children—it is today's imperative.

[Save Our Children: Administration for Excellence, 1978]

Hay fever season, 1983, and the incomparable Rev., shaking and sweating at the Lincoln Memorial, demonstrates to Old Abe that the evolution of American oratory did not stand still after Gettysburg:

Make up your mind. There is nothing more powerful than a made-up mind. Run toward freedom! Run! You may lose if you run, but you're guaranteed to lose if you don't. Run! At the worst you'll gain your self-respect, and at the best you'll help to save a nation. Run! Take the chains off of your ankles, but don't shift them to your mind. Run! Run from disgrace to amazing grace. Run! Run from the outhouse to the statehouse to the courthouse to the White House. Run! But hold on to your dreams.

[August 27, 1983]

Still more numinous rumble bumble from the Rev. as he wows the clinically insane at the 1984 Democratic convention:

Jesus was rejected from the inn and born in the slum. But just because you were born in the slum does not mean that the slum was born in you. With a made-up mind, which is the most powerful instrument in the world, you can rise above your circumstances. No mountain is too high, and no valley is too low; no forest is too dense, and no water is too deep—if your mind is made up. With eyesight, you may see misery. But with insight, you can see the brighter side.

[July 17, 1984]

Exhortatory vibrations from the most eminent mucous membrane to address the 1984 convention:

The Rainbow includes disabled Americans. The color "chrome" fits in the rainbow. The disabled have their handicap revealed and their genius concealed, while the able-bodied have their genius revealed and their disability concealed. But ultimately we must judge people by their values and their contribution. Don't leave anybody out. I would rather have Roosevelt in a wheelchair than Reagan on a horse.

[July 12, 1984]

Historical reflection presented by the Rev. to the Tenth Annual convention of PUSH as the roof falls in:

America was built on five economic and social pillars. After it cleared the Native Americans away through terrorist genocide, enslaved blacks as the first major American industry, annexed Hispanics against their will, the foundation of the five pillars was laid. These five pillars were: (1) cheap labor, (2) cheap energy, (3) cheap raw materials, (4) an exploited labor market divided on the ideology of race or skin worship, and (5) expensive exports. Each of these pillars is now crumbling, the nation's foundation is shaking, and the people are in a state of panic.

[July 9, 1981]

Five mellifluous snatches of paralogistic genius presented by the Rev. at the "What's Happening" Teen Conference of 1978, when the Pericles of modern American oratory was just raising his first yelps:

And so we say, "Down with dope; up with hope" because we cannot be what we ought to be if we push dope in our veins rather than hope in our brains. . . . Intercourse without discourse threatens this generation. . . . Sex is a thrill. But sex is not the only thrill in life. Twenty-five years ago when Senator Joseph McCarthy and the McCarthy movement were threatening free speech, a generation of youth rebelled and protested, fighting for free speech—and that was a thrill.

The last sparks of intelligent thought suddenly go aglimmer:

In other words, if a little baby falls in a bathtub full of water, that baby will drown and must live with the consequences of that decision. If a six-year-old innocent, wonderful little child steps in front of a moving car, that child will most likely be killed because that child must live with the consequences of that decision.

An American Whitman sings out:

Finally, I want you to know that there's nothing more dangerous than to be trapped with a shrinking mind and an expanding behind. You must develop your mind to protect your behind, your body, and your soul. . . . It's not my aptitude but my attitude that determines my altitude, with a little intestinal fortitude.

The Rev. provides still another candidate for *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*:

History teaches us that ultimately might is not right; right is might. Peace is possible. Peace is imperative. The nuclear race must end. It is too costly, too dangerous, and too likely to take place. We must choose the human race over the nuclear race.

Jesse, the modern Metternich:

Peace requires justice and that we play the game by one set of rules.

My approach to foreign policy is to engage in negotiations, not confrontations. World leaders must initiate positive action, not just engage in negative reaction.

A candid moment after Governor Michael Dukakis has given Jesse short shrift and opted for the Hon. Bentsen:

Q. Are you angry or upset that you were not chosen?

A. No. I'm too controlled. I'm too clear. I'm too mature to be angry. I am focused on what we must do to keep hope alive.

[July 12, 1988]

The euphuistic Rev. Jackson after due deliberation on being rejected for the vice presidency by Gov. Dukakis:

It is too much to expect that I will go out in the field and be the champion vote picker and bale them up and bring them back to the big house and get a reward of thanks, while people who do not pick nearly as much votes, who don't carry the same amount of weight among the people, sit in the big house etc. etc. etc.

[July 14, 1988]

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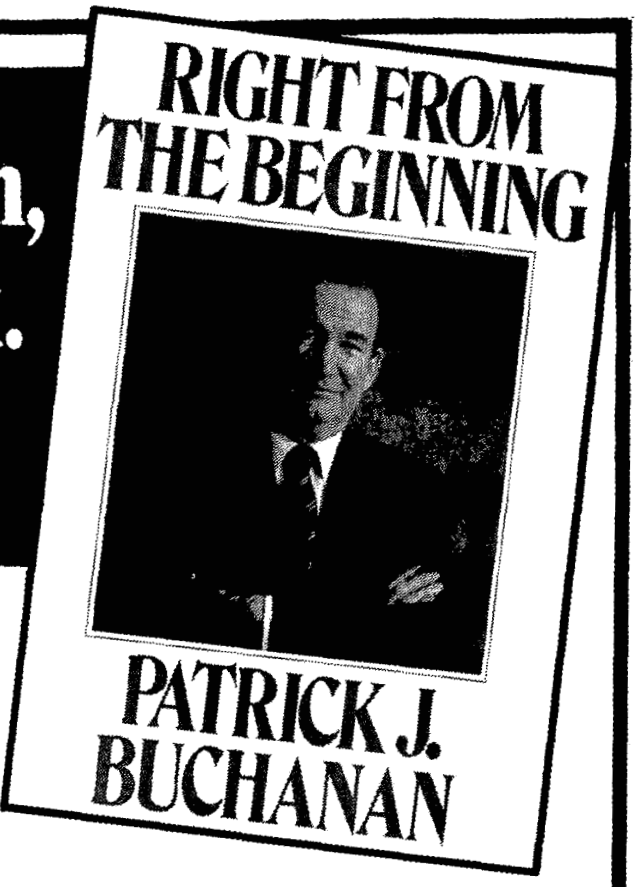

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